

THE *Whenwes* OF RHODESIA



By Louis Bolze and Rose Martin

Ann
with love
David
Christmas 1979

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THE WHENWES OF RHODESIA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR/ARTIST

Louis Bolze

(in association with
Klaus Ravn)

Life with UDI

More Life with UDI

Rose Martin

Meet the Rhodesians

THE WHENWES OF RHODESIA

by

LOUIS BOLZE and ROSE MARTIN



Bulawayo
BOOKS OF RHODESIA
1978

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BULAWAYO

INTRODUCING THE AUTHOR AND ARTIST . . .



LOUIS BOLZE originator of the Whenwe cartoon ideas and captions, which were drawn by Rose Martin, came to Rhodesia in 1952 from South Africa where his forbears settled nearly 300 years ago.

He was in magazine journalism and public relations in Rhodesia before founding Books of Rhodesia Publishing Co. (Pvt.) Ltd. ten years ago, since when the company has published 96 titles – almost all on Rhodesia, and many dealing with the early days.

Although this is his third cartoon book, Louis lays no claim to being a professional funny man, but tries to retain a sense of humour in these difficult times. It is most important, he says, that Rhodesians should not lose their sense of perspective and act precipitately – only to regret it later. Stay, and help to build a better future, he adds.

ROSE MARTIN, artist, is a second generation Rhodesian whose grandparents arrived in the country two years after the reign of Lobengula. She lives with her family in Bulawayo and teaches at an art school.



While drawing the 100 cartoons she had the opportunity of studying her fellow Rhodesians afresh, notably those seen to lurk furtively in the precincts of the Reserve Bank, observed buying up stocks of suitcases, or trying to get rid of Fido on Pets Parade. As a result she has become an expert at diagnosing an onset of Whenweitis.

With this experience, and having projected herself into many Whenwe situations overseas, she confirms that she could never live out of sight of the russet msasas; or out of earshot of the go-away bird. Her Rhodesian roots are far too deep, she says.



THE WHENWE STORY

DURING THE LATE nineteenth century the powers of Europe competed in the Scramble for Africa. A century later we see the trend reversed, and many descendants of those who colonised and brought civilisation to these parts departing — some of them rather hastily.

In recent years, the forces of change have reached Rhodesia where those who feel unable, for various reasons, to adapt to change, have joined the migration. This development is observed with sadness by those Rhodesians who regard this country as their permanent and only home. Of course, treks are nothing new to southern Africa. We are all

familiar with the Great Trek from the Eastern Cape to what was then the unknown hinterland of the African sub-continent. Indeed, Rhodesia itself benefited from a number of organised treks, especially to the Eastern Districts.

What, you may ask, has a book of light-hearted cartoons to do with a subject which may more properly form the study of a serious historical thesis? But, however one looks at the matter, or whatever one calls it, the regrettable fact remains that Rhodesia is losing one of its most valuable resources — skilled people.

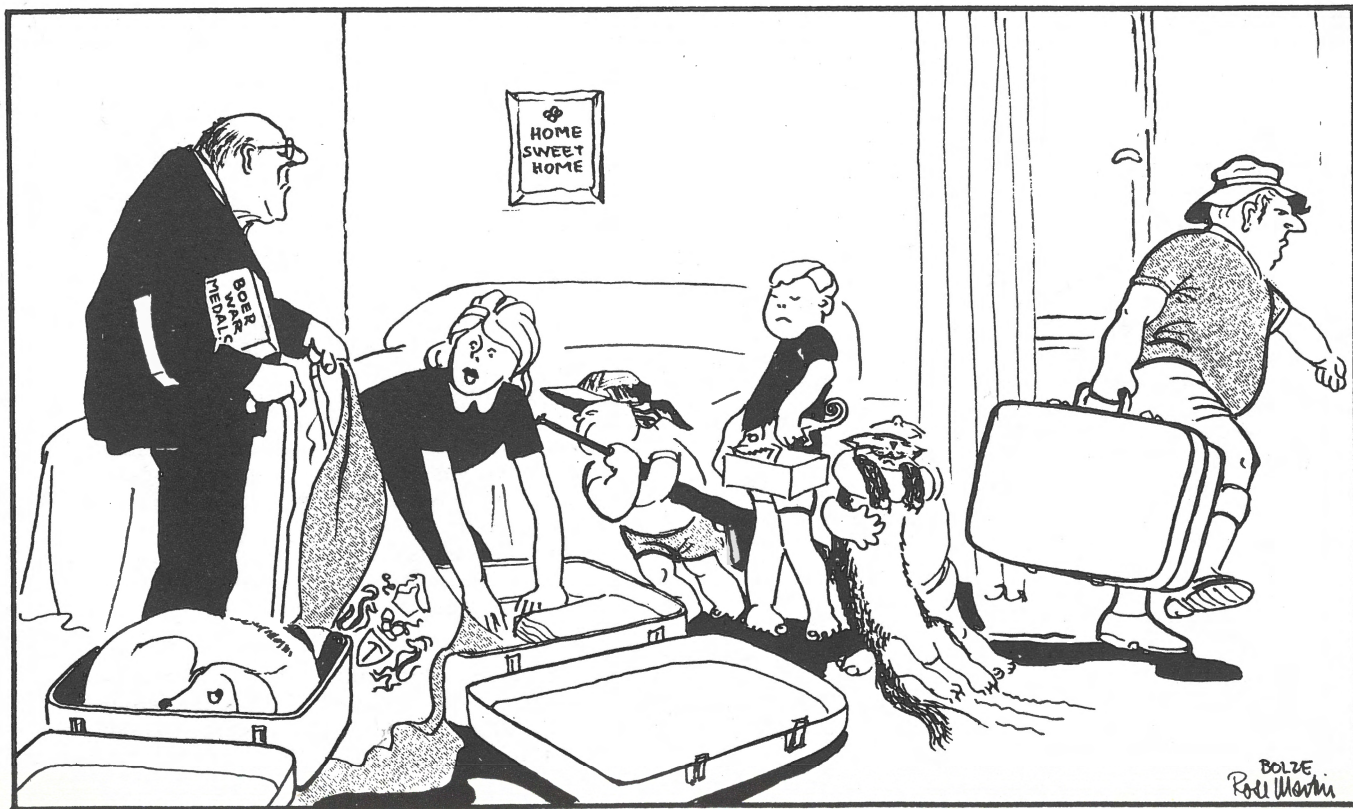
Almost everything has its lighter side, and speculation on the subject gave birth to this series of cartoons of imaginary situations in which some former Rhodesians have found themselves. Some months ago a friend who regularly visits Andorra, in the course of conversation referred to a colony of "Wenwees" (at least, that is what it sounded like) and, begging her pardon, I had to admit that my knowledge of Andorra was extremely limited, and, who pray, were the "Wenwees"? The "Whenwes", she then explained with a chuckle, were retired and emigrant Kenyans, who lived so much in the past that every other comment was prefixed by the phrase, "When we were in Kenya . . .".

I realised then that in Rhodesia today we are, indeed, witnessing the birth of a great new Whenwe Movement, a virtual diaspora of Rhodesian migrants making their way to every corner of the globe; spreading Rhodesian culture and the traditions of the braaivleis, beer-drinking, rugby, cattle-raising, tobacco-growing, financial wizardry, and a host of other peculiarly Rhodesian accomplishments.

Come to think of it, this Rhodesian Whenweism is something of a world phenomenon, which historians of the future will no doubt study with great interest. One foresees, for instance, a university Professor of Philology investigating the

influence of Rhodesia's unique vocabulary on the people, say, of Western Australia; or the impact of Rhodesian sanctions-busting on the impeccable commercial practices of Great Britain. The implications are endless. Bush shirts have been reported on Fifth Avenue, New York; and a bunch of American maize and tobacco growers are known to have acknowledged the superiority of Rhodesian farming know-how. Already distinctive colonies of ex-Rhodesians have sprung up in various parts of South Africa, Britain, the U.S.A., Canada, New Zealand and Australia, South America and Israel, with sprinklings of more intrepid souls finding their way into remote, wilderness areas where they are busy implementing their pioneering instincts. We learn also, that with typical Rhodesian enterprise, some former Rhodesian ranchers have already trained Argentinian gauchos to use a mixture of Sindebele and Shona when rounding up their imported Afrikaner bulls.

Whenwes develop certain marked characteristics when out of their natural habitat or environment, the most annoying of which is undoubtedly the habit of making adverse comparisons on almost every aspect of their new surroundings. But Whenweitis dies hard, especially the Rhodesian strain, since Rhodesians have much to shout about. One has only to glance through these cartoons for confirmation



of this characteristic. Another is that of association of ideas. Whenwes will frequently be reminded of their former life-style in the strangest of ways, a habit which then produces a mild form of schizophrenia, as they stand with one foot in their country of adoption, and the other somewhere between the Limpopo and the Zambesi — that is, figuratively speaking, of course! This condition is known to be more acute among erstwhile chauvinist Rhodesian right-wingers.

However, Whenwes are Rhodesia's most effective unpaid publicists, even though they may be given to exaggerating their claims for the country's attributes. Distance lends yet further enchantment to the view, and by some convoluted form of logic things which once gave irritation back home, in retrospect become the very things most missed; for instance, to the servantless family in their new overseas home even that old skellum, Sixpence, is accorded the virtues of a saint.

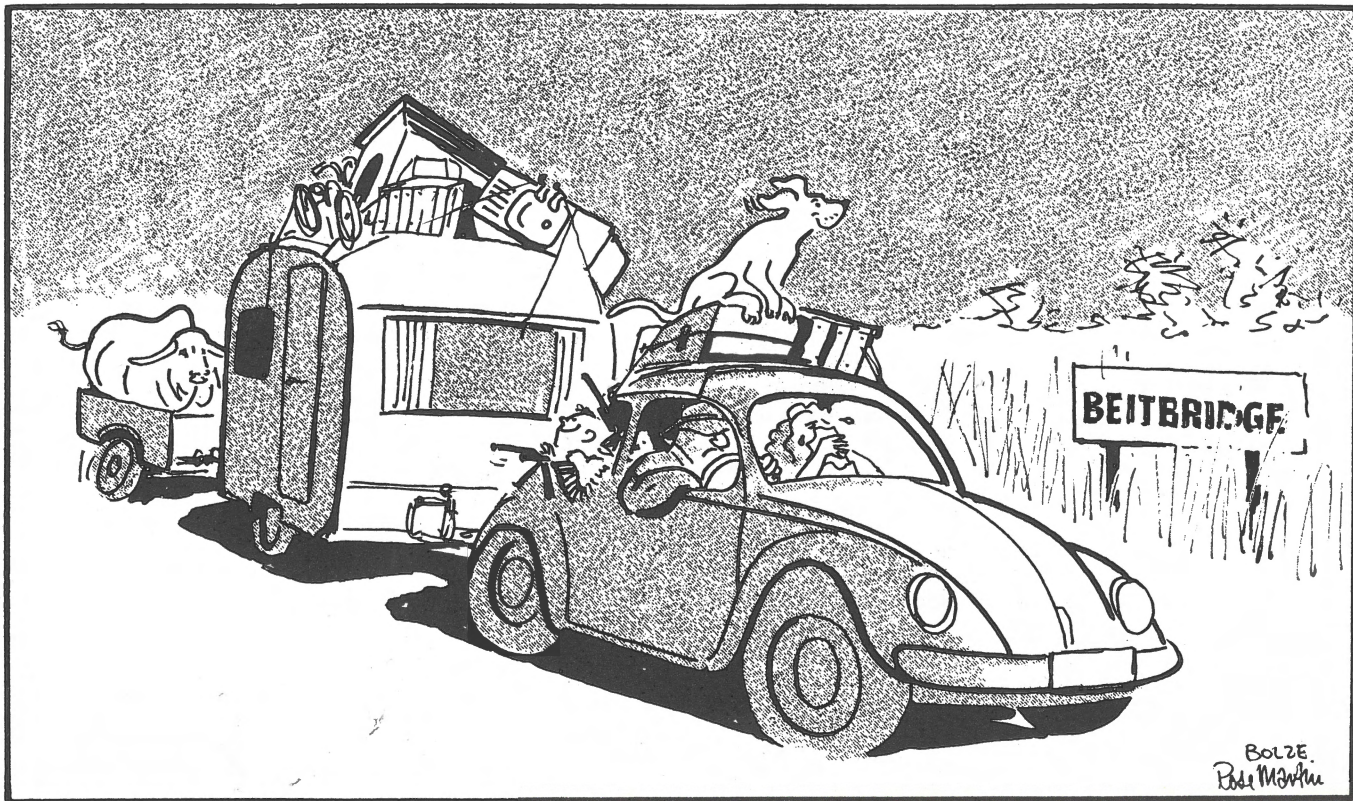
Recognition of this new occurrence prompted an investigation into early manifestations of the Whenweitis syndrome, and the following are some of the indications:

- A morbid interest in press reports on currency swindles.

- A compulsive urge to attend house sales and auction marts to bid on 'antique furniture'.
- A more than passing interest in displays of diamond rings in jewellers' shops.
- An irresistible desire to frequent travel agencies during lunch breaks.
- The assumption of an incredulous expression when studying the "Property for Sale" smalls in the Press.
- Making frequent dummy-run trips overseas 'to test the temperature of the water'.

Whenwes, of course, become insufferable bores and, unless they mend their ways and quickly adapt to their alien surroundings, are shunned by society. Incurable Whenwes have a tendency to develop strange and secretive passions, such as travelling from Bognor Regis to Brighton to celebrate every Rhodes and Founders holiday; or like peppery old Colonel Thwyte-Fordham, now living at Naboomspruit, fly the Rhodesian flag every 11th November.

One cannot overlook the effect on the children of Whenwe families, who find themselves in strange surroundings. Their reactions to their new environment are constant reminders of the fact that those who are thirteen years and under have known only



a sanctions situation; and being able to purchase petrol without coupons, or travel the equivalent distance of Bulawayo to Beit Bridge, without a convoy, comes as something strange. Young Africans going over to America on educational bursaries are also sometimes taken aback by rudeness meted out to them, around Harlem for instance, as depicted in two of the cartoons.

Some twelve years ago Klaus Ravn and I produced **Life with UDI** and **More Life with UDI**, a 'cartoon history' of the first year of independence. It occurred to me that this medium offered a lot of scope for recording the present sad episode in Rhodesia's history — the birth of the Whenwe. It is not our purpose to poke fun at those who have left but, if we have a mission at all, to try to persuade others that our Rhodesian way of life, despite its many difficulties, still has much to commend it.

I took the Whenwes cartoon idea to Rose Martin whose talents in the humorous field are already well known from her **Meet the Rhodesians** cartoon book. She entered into the spirit of the project with enthusiasm. She started drawing in September, and we now have pleasure in presenting **The Whenwes of Rhodesia**. If as a Whenwe, you happen to read it in Brisbane or Baltimore, in Haifa or Huddersfield, we send you this message: Rhode-

sia's skies are as sunny as ever; the Matopos as serene and beautiful as they have always been; the jacarandas, bougainvillea, bauhenias and flâm-boyants have bloomed more brightly than ever this year; our people of all races are as courteous, smiling and helpful as only they know how to be; our opportunities are golden; and we're far from being licked!

When next you get an acute attack of nostalgia or homesickness waste no time in calling at your nearest travel agent and buy a one-way ticket back to Whenweland!

LOUIS W. BOLZE

Bulawayo,
October, 1978



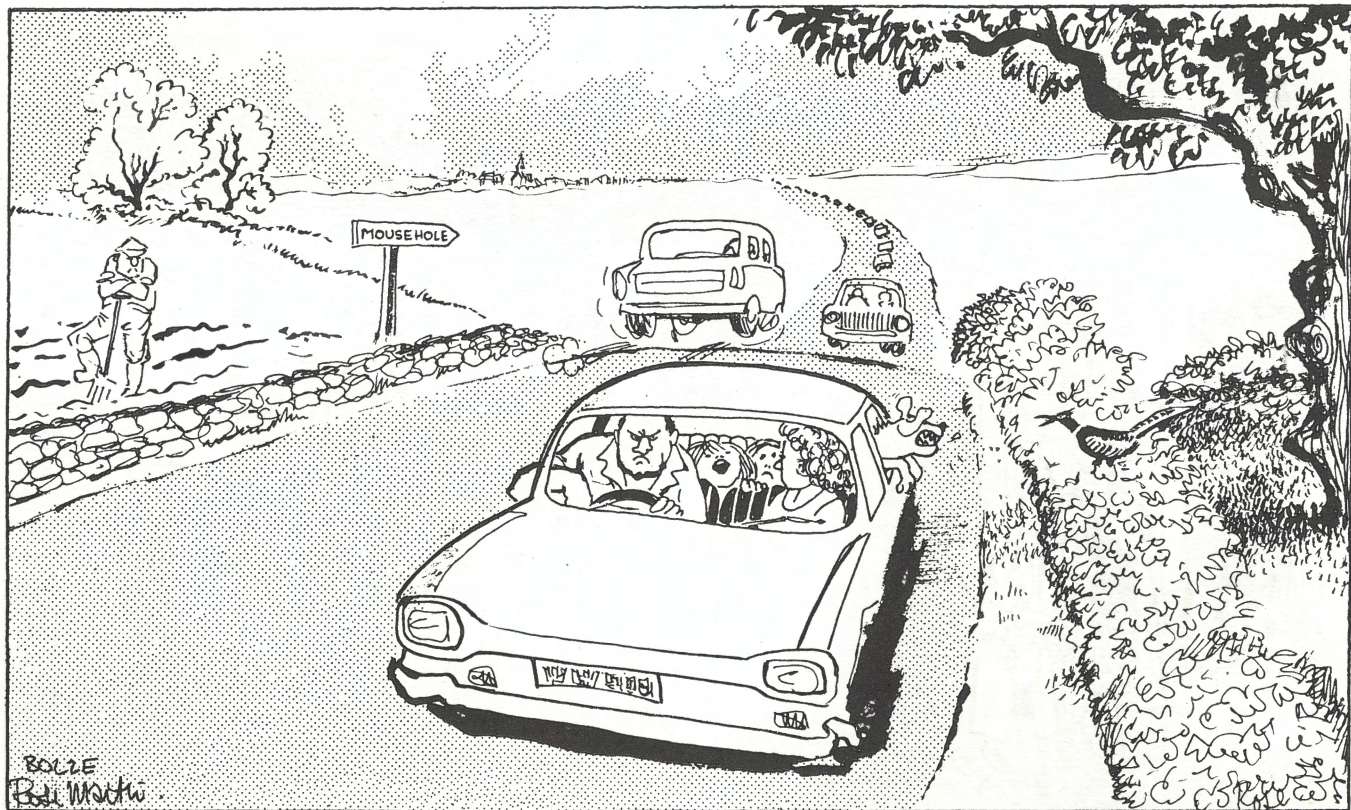
"OK, OK, go to the blasted USA if you must. I'm going to mother in Israel."



"Although Harry was born at Enkeldoorn he travels on an Irish passport. He discovered from his grandma's tombstone recently that she had been born in County Cork."



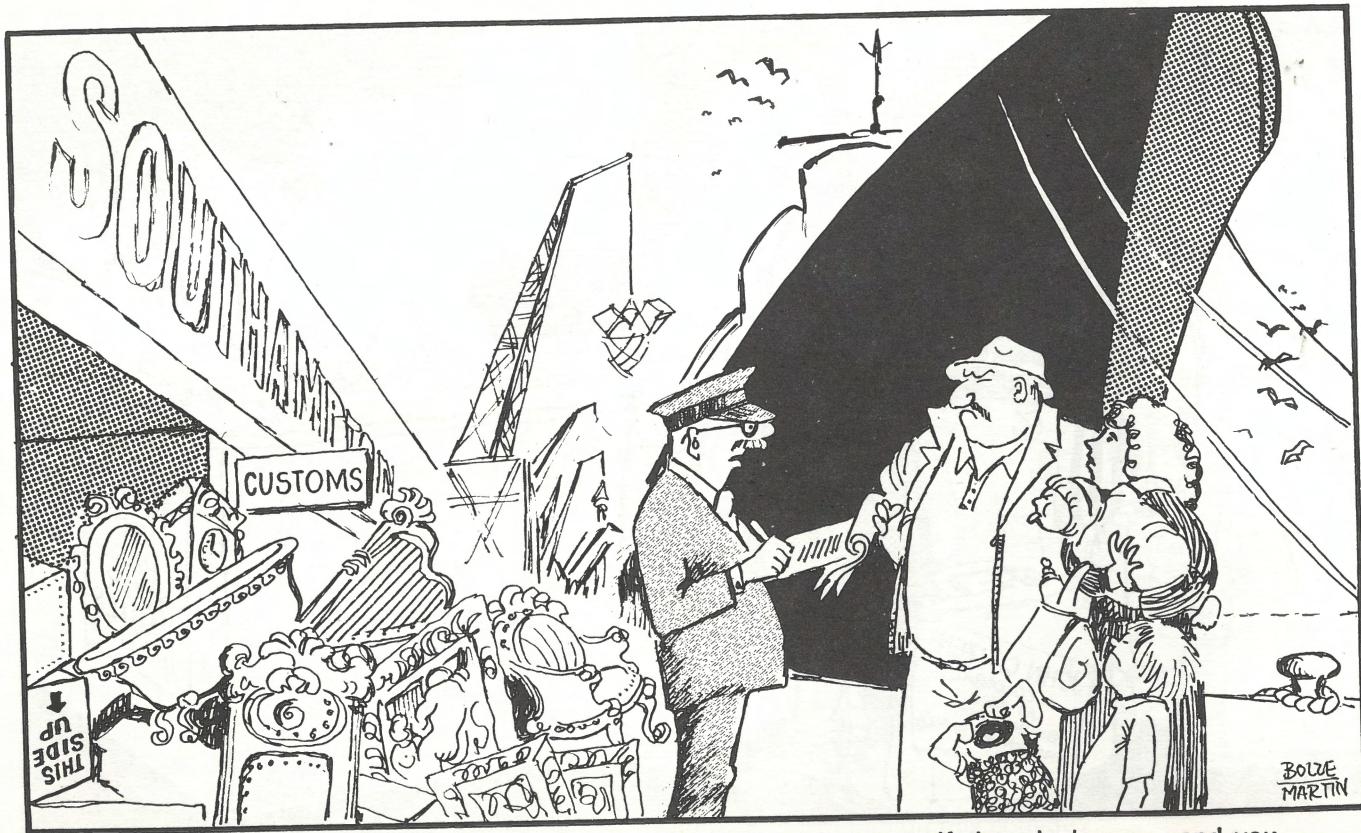
"Mum, why is Britain called 'Great'?"



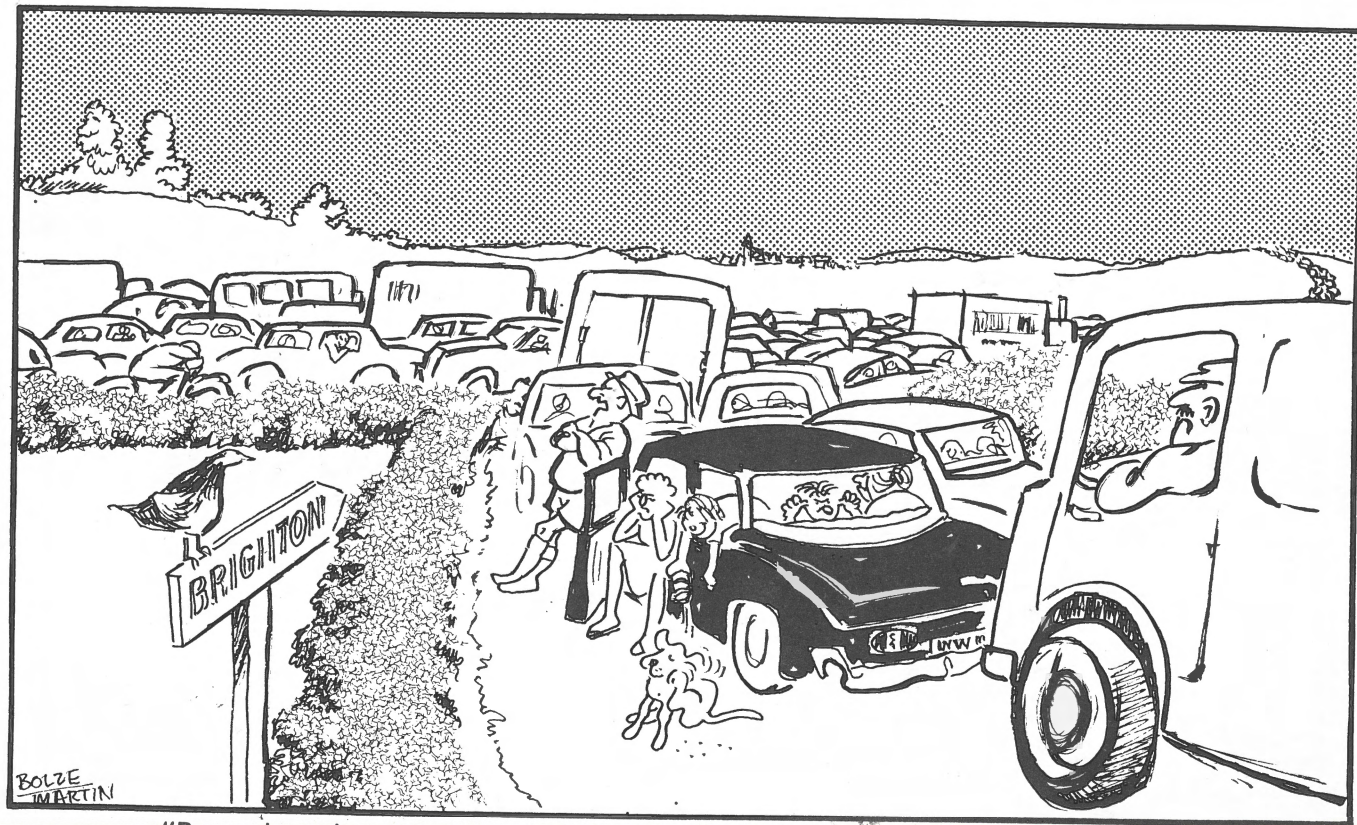
"Mummy, why didn't daddy bring his gun with him on this convoy?"



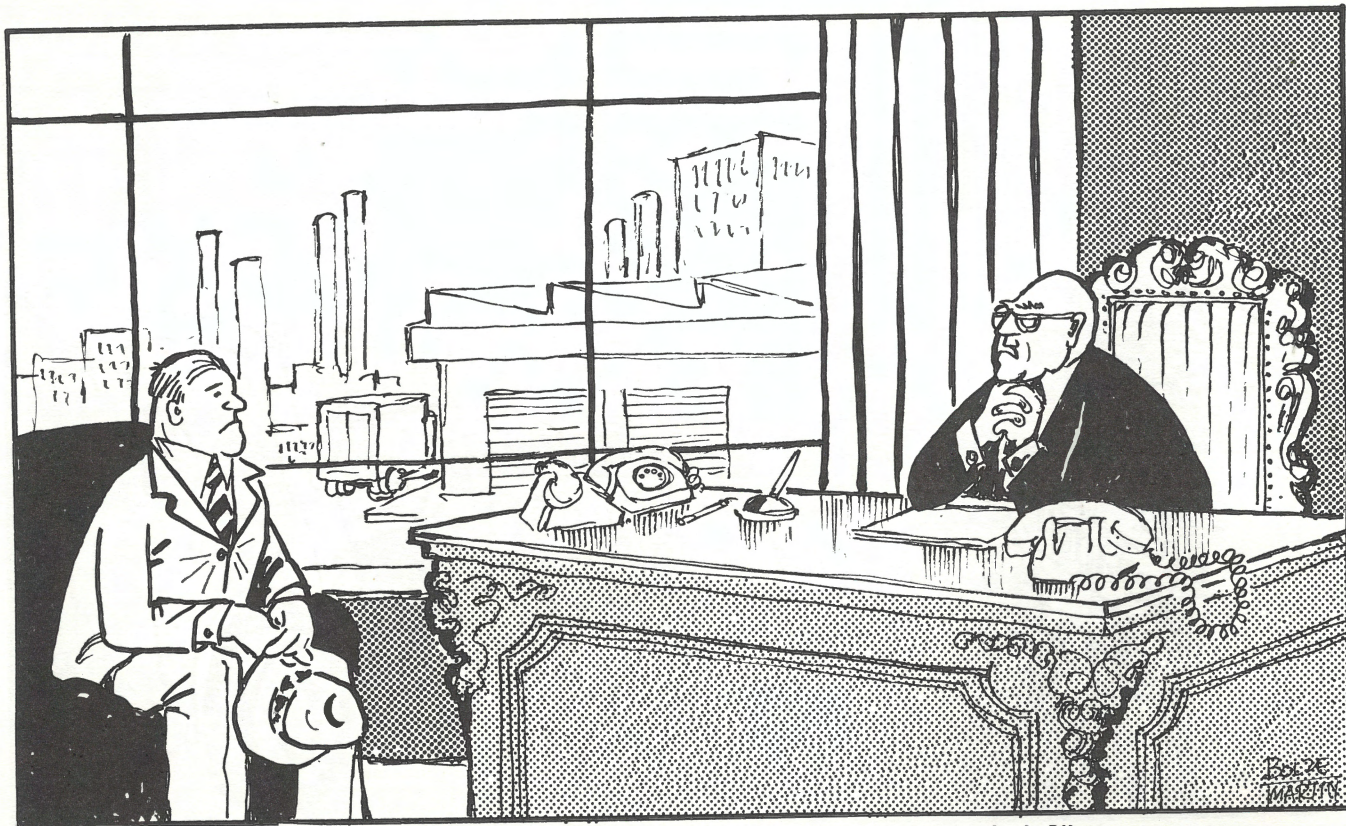
"My nationality? Well, I grew up in Kenya . . . then I farmed in Zambia. During Federation I was a British citizen, and I have had a vote in Rhodesia. I have now left Zimbabwe but actually I was born at sea . . . of Irish parents."



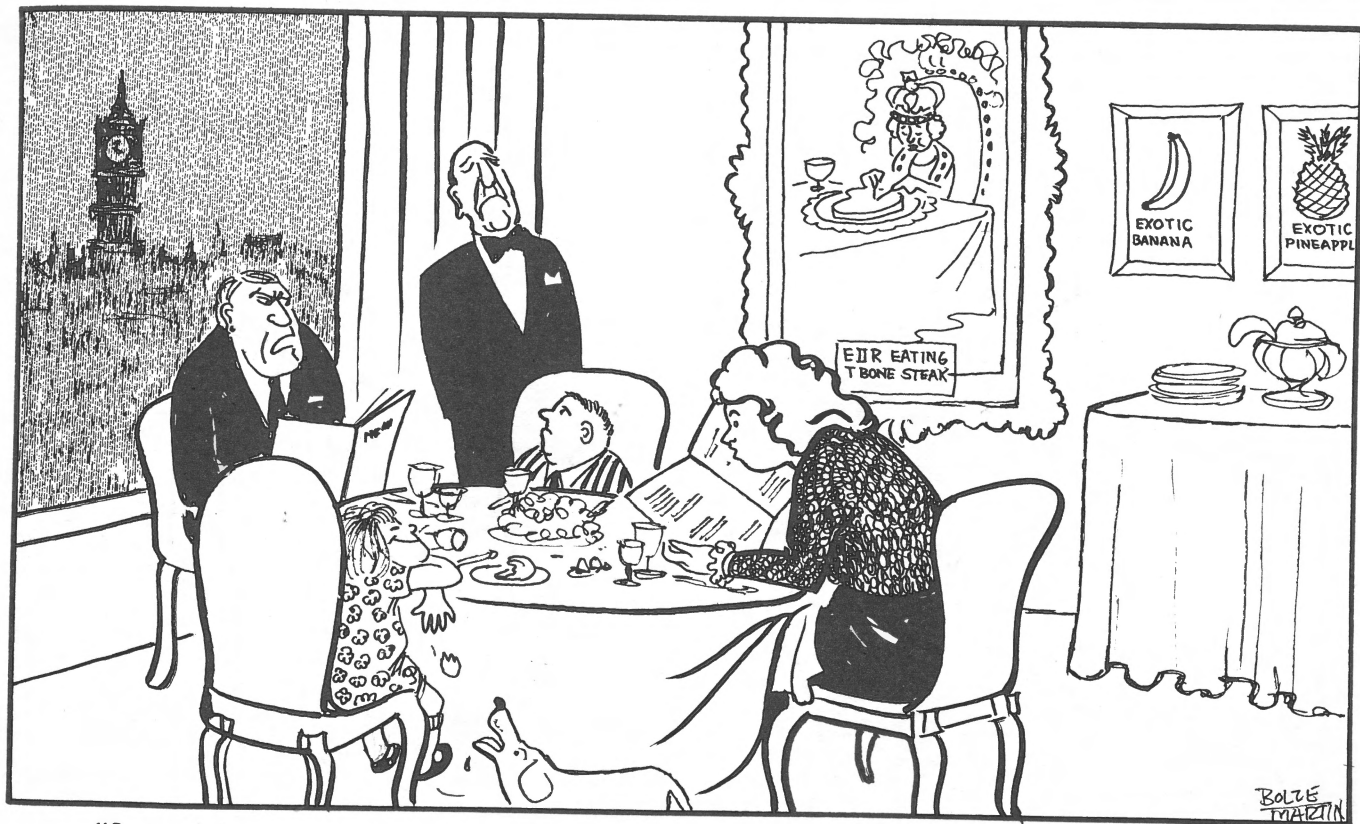
"Three antique dining-room suites, twenty oil paintings, three grandfather clocks . . . and you say you lived at Hatfield, Salisbury?"



"Remember when we used to run out to Maleme Dam in an hour with the caravan?"

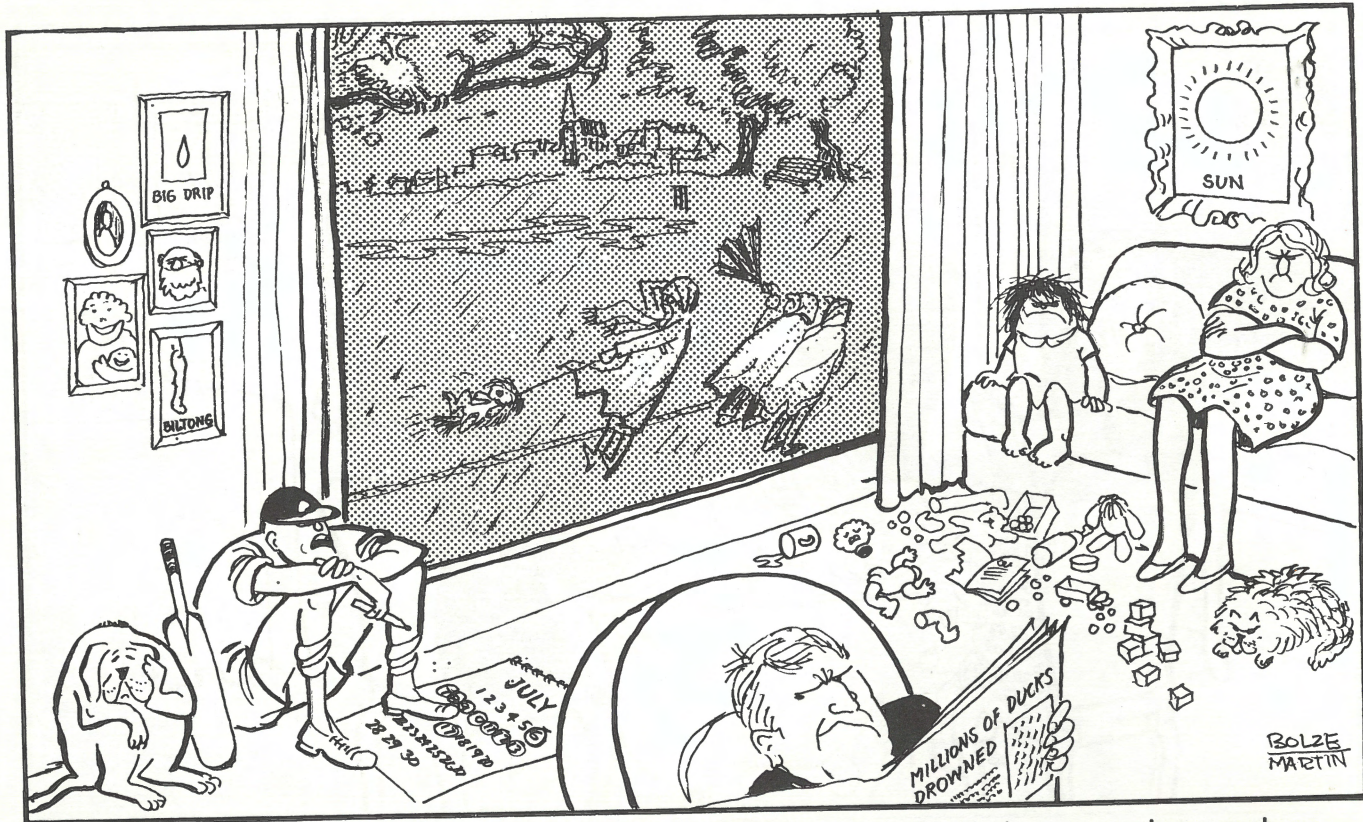


"So you're a Whenwe from Africa. Kenya, Zambia or Rhodesia?"



BOLLE
MARTIN

"Sorry, Johnny, not a king-size steak. All we can afford over here is a mini-steak between the four of us."



"Whether you like it or not, I'm going to say it: 'When we were in Rhodesia we never knew such damned awful weather'."



"One good thing about the British and their sanctions, you can still buy Rhodesian tobacco here."



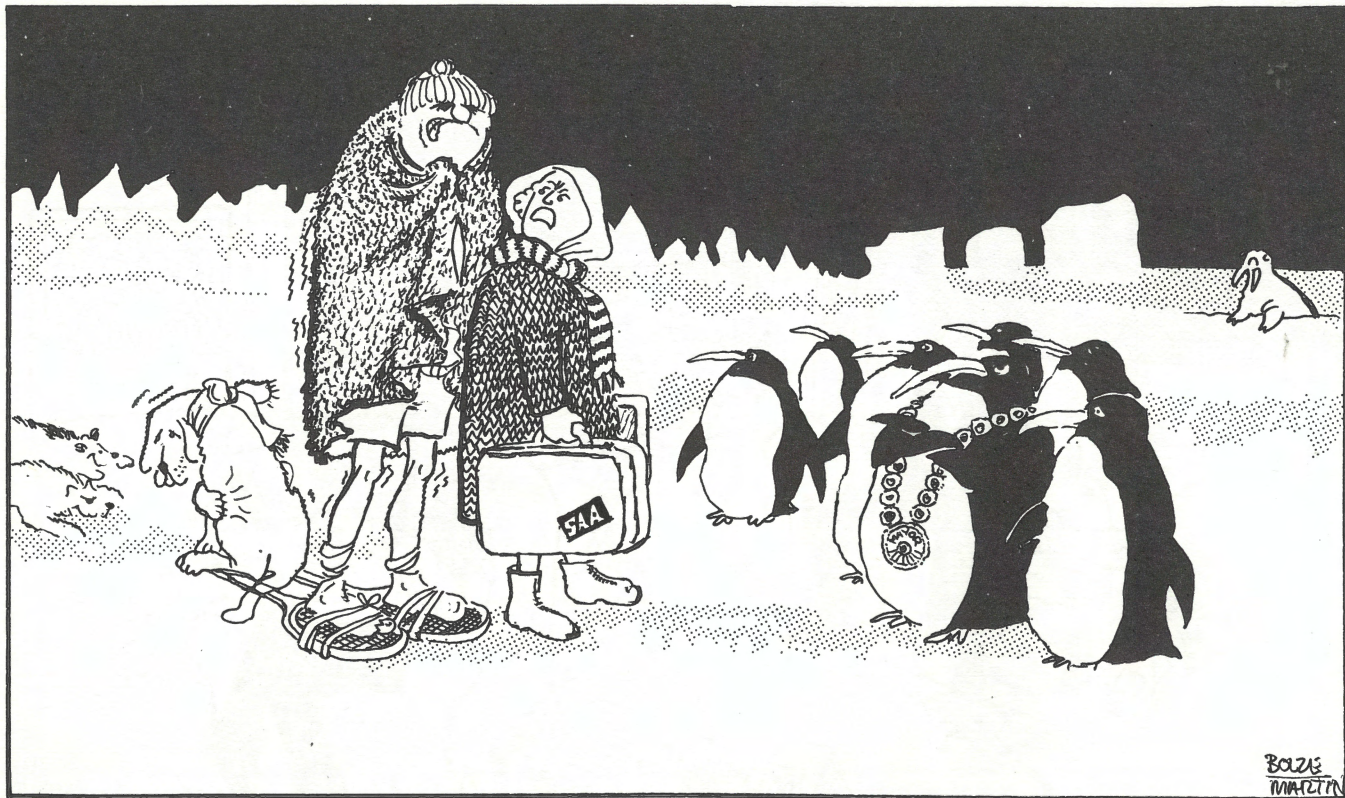
"To think that we left beautiful Umtali for this."



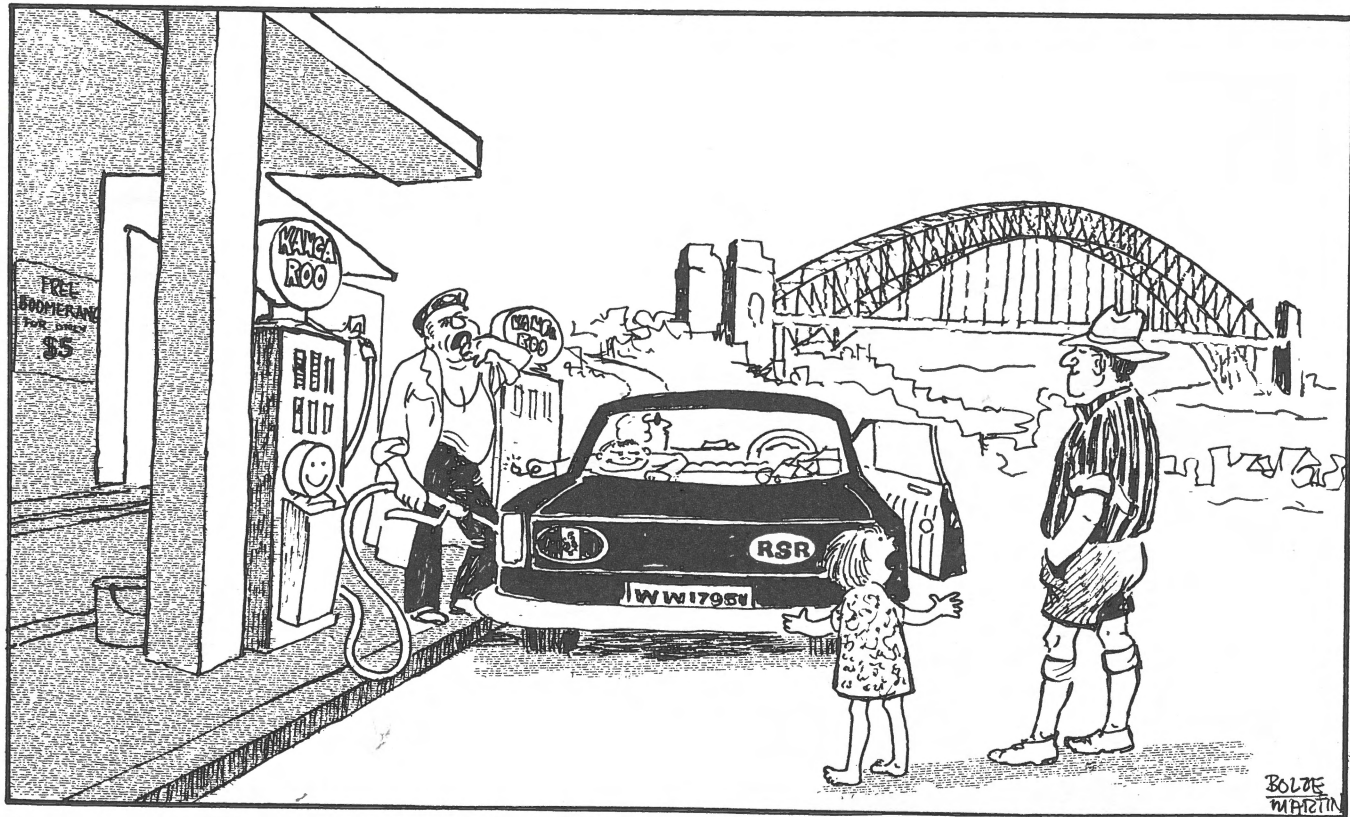
"When we went to Wankie Park we used to see real lions walking down the road every day."



"OK, so they know how to play rugby. They have lovely scenery and a good rainfall, but name one other point in its favour."



"When you said the 'white south', I didn't think you meant this far south."



"You mean we don't need petrol coupons or anything?"

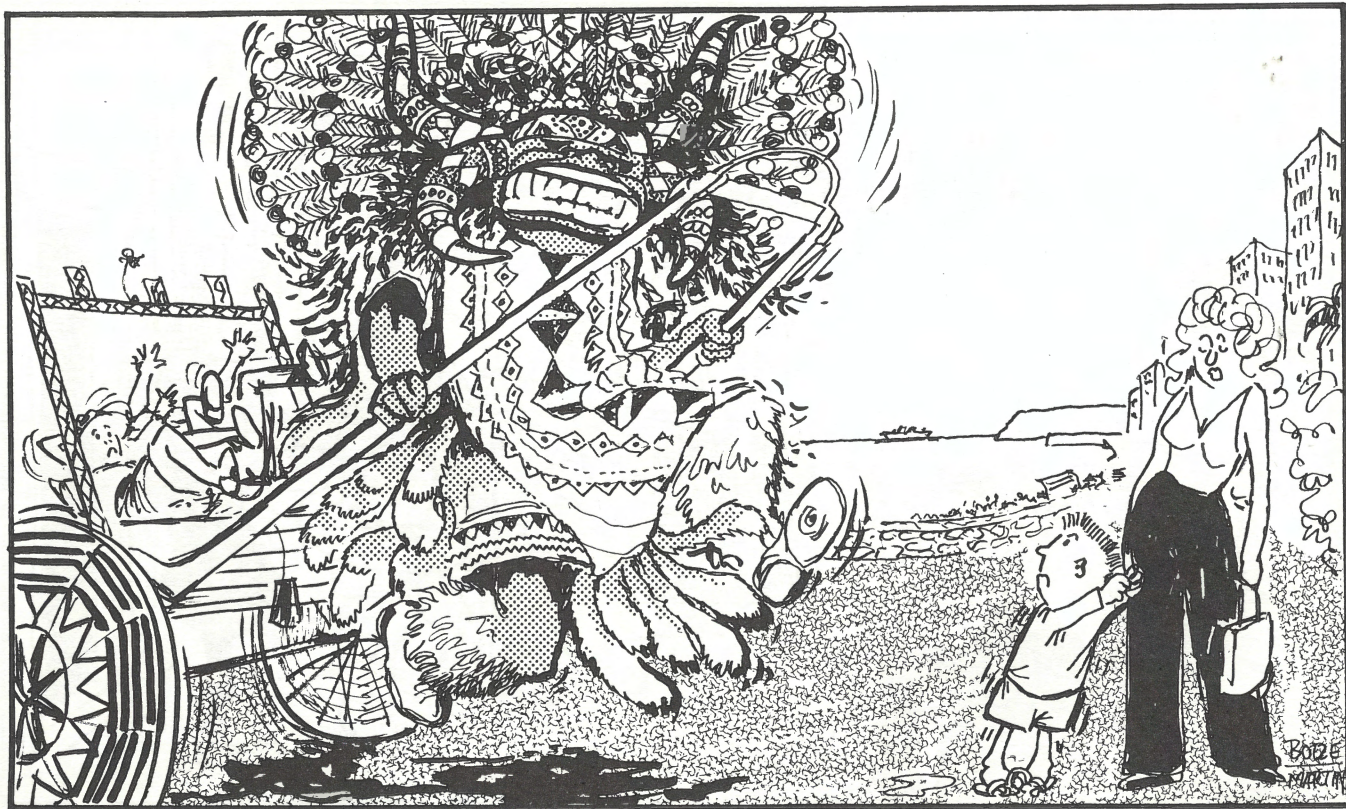


"If it was good enough for Borrowdale it's good enough for here."



" . . . used to wear it in Rhodesia. Try it, it's *mushi for the sun."

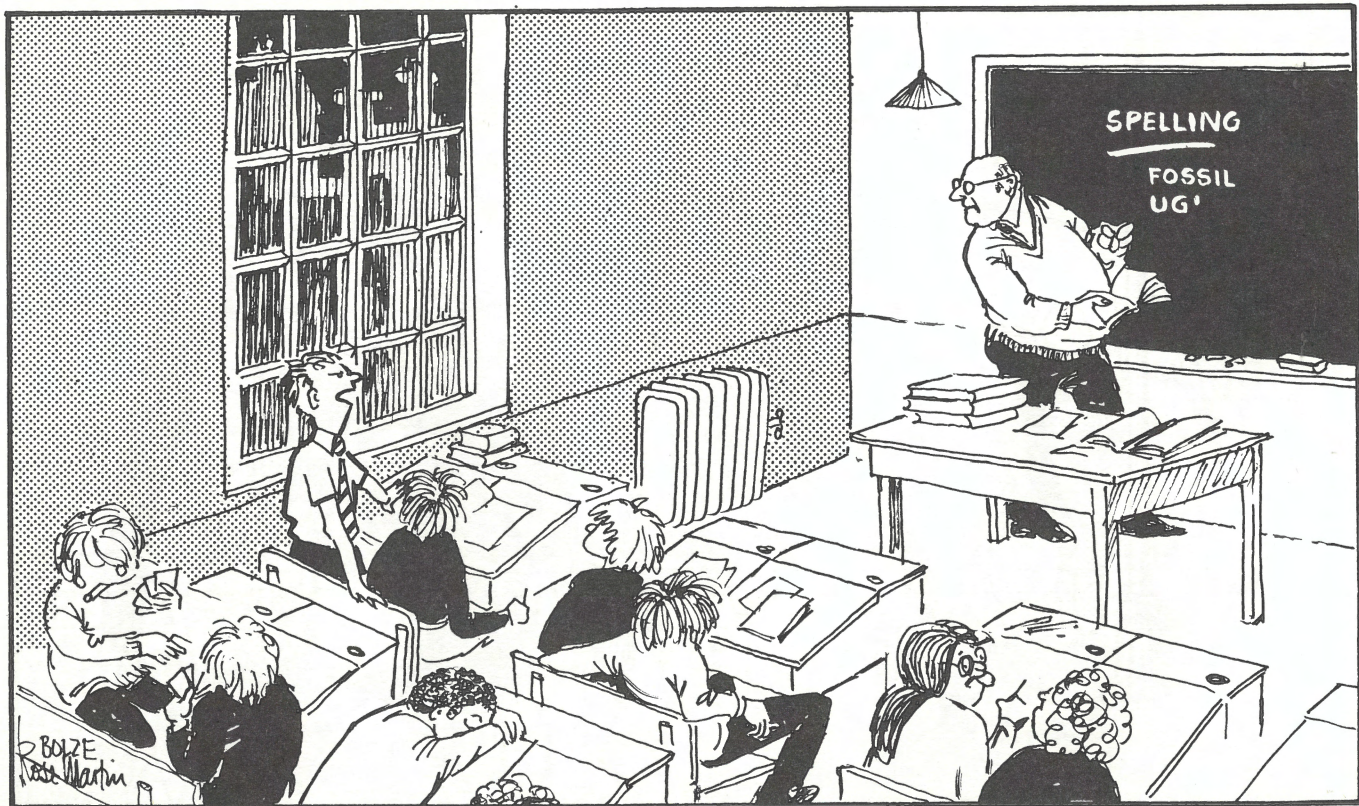
*African equivalent of "super."



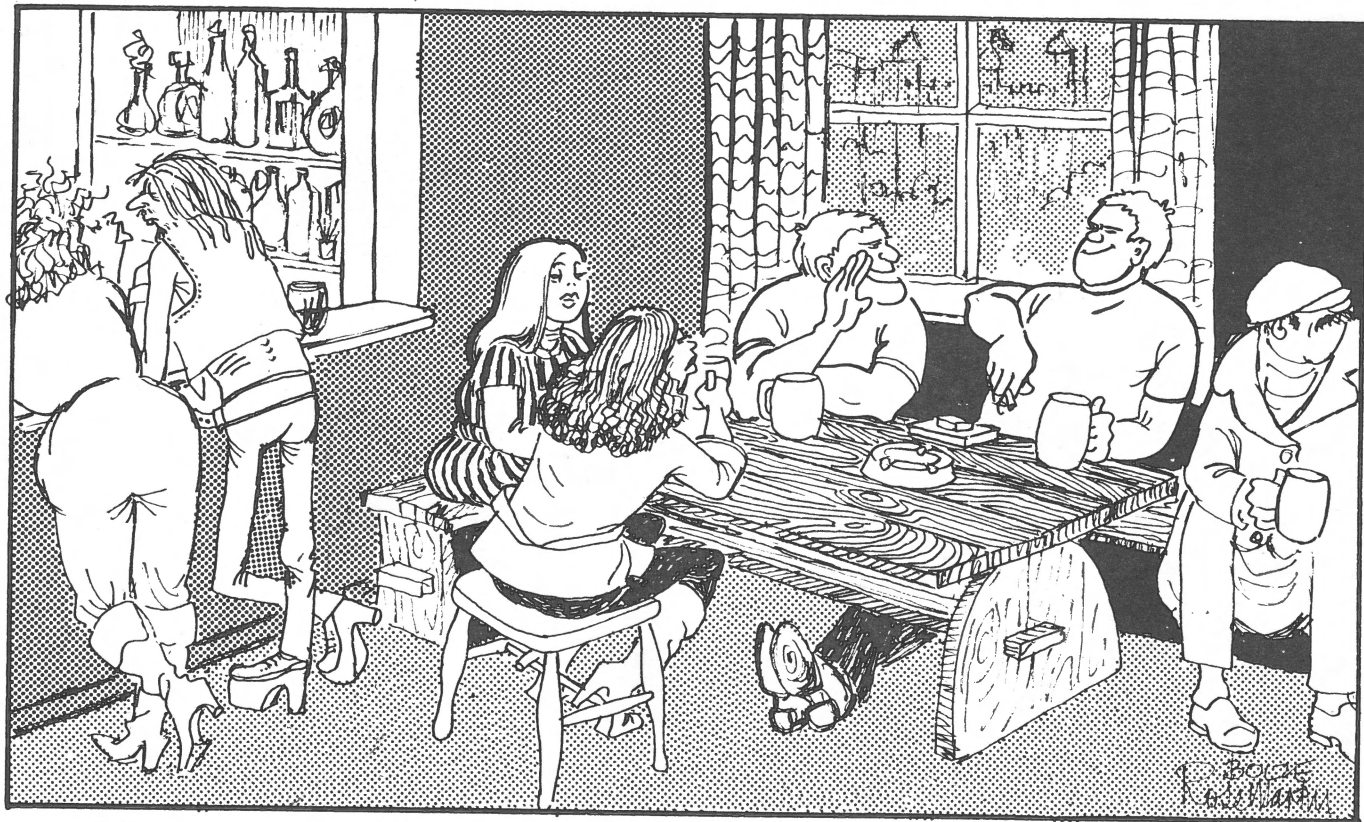
"No darling, he's not a terrorist."



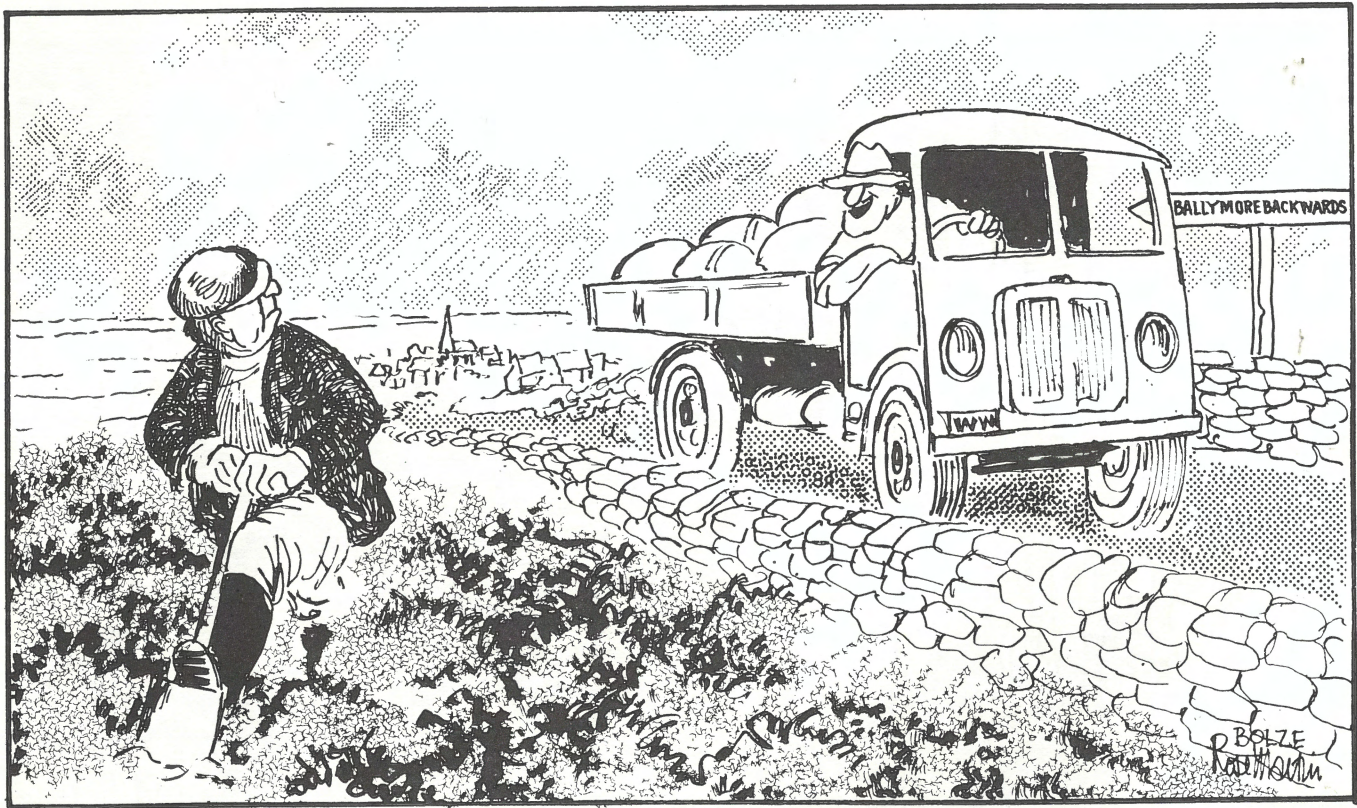
"The only time I stood in a queue in Rhodesia was to buy tickets for a Currie Cup game."



"Please sir, what does culpable mean? My father says that Britain and America are equally culpable in allowing the Marxists into southern Africa. We came from Rhodesia and he should know."



"She's either very young or thick – she wants to know what we mean by 'sanctions busting'."

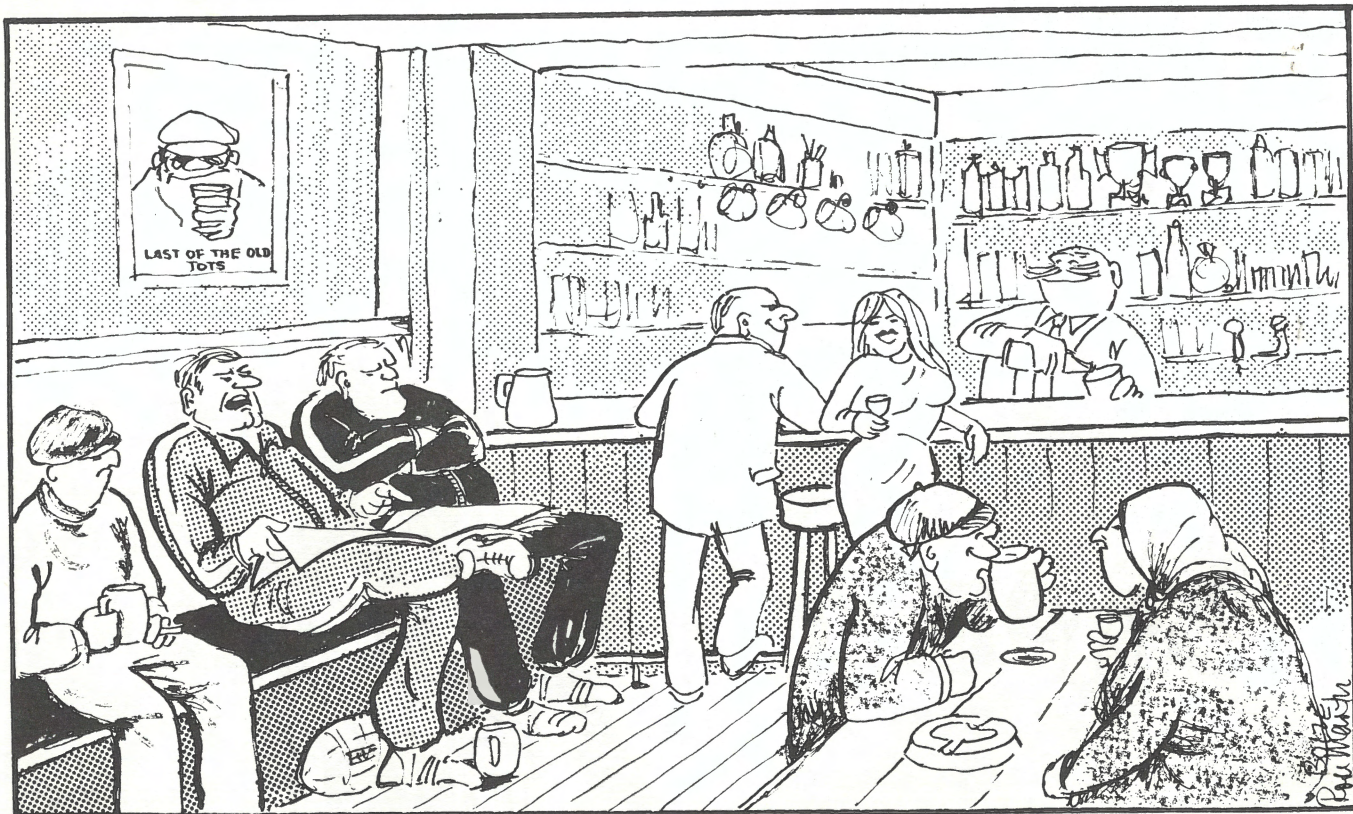


" used to grow them by the square mile back on the Rhodesian lowveld."

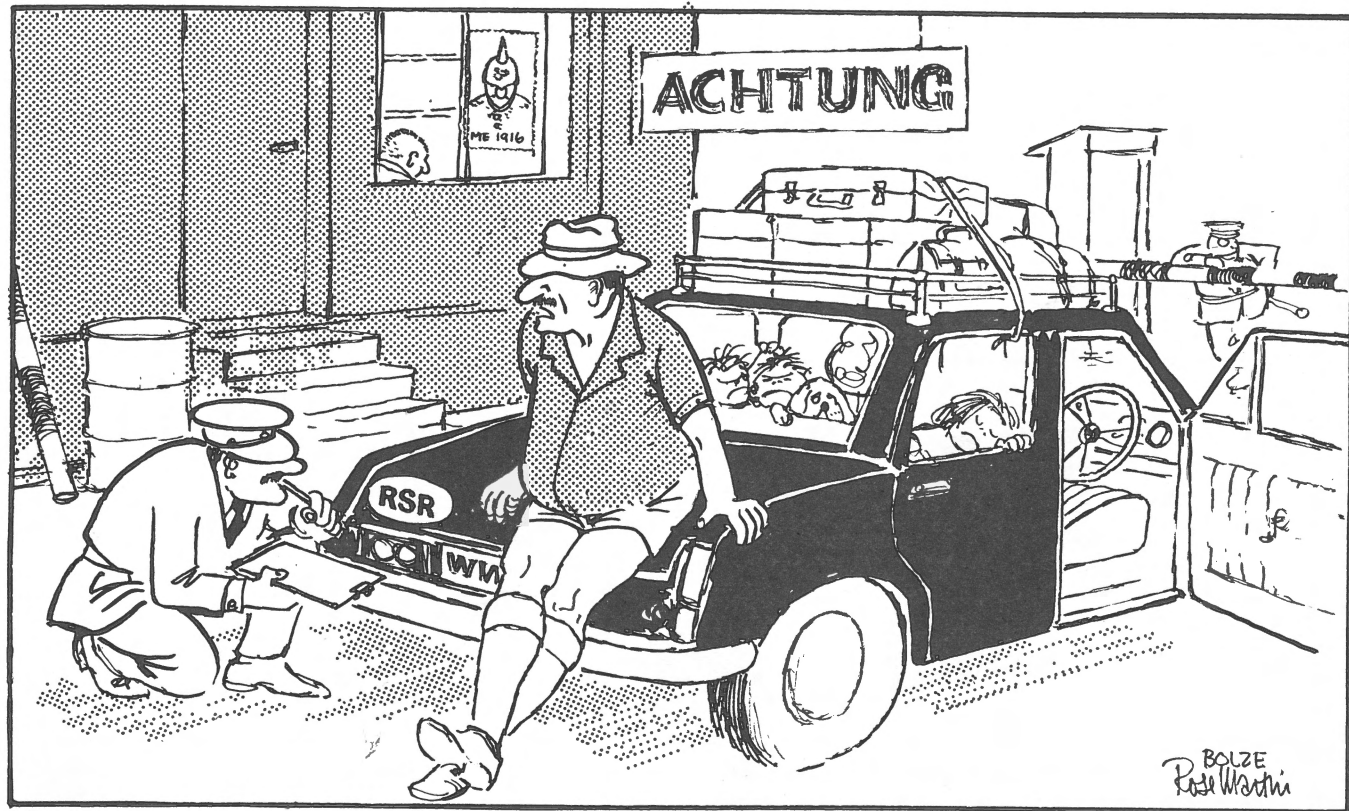


"When we migrated, my friends from *Bambe Zonke went to Clifton, and we moved from Bulawayo to Fish Hoek. So you see, we're still rivals."

*"Grab All" – a name given to Salisbury



"I see Transvaal wiped the floor with our boys in the Currie Cup match 47-10. We should never have left."



"Nein, Fritz, it does not mean 'Republic of Soviet Russia' although the Russians are trying damned hard to make it just that."



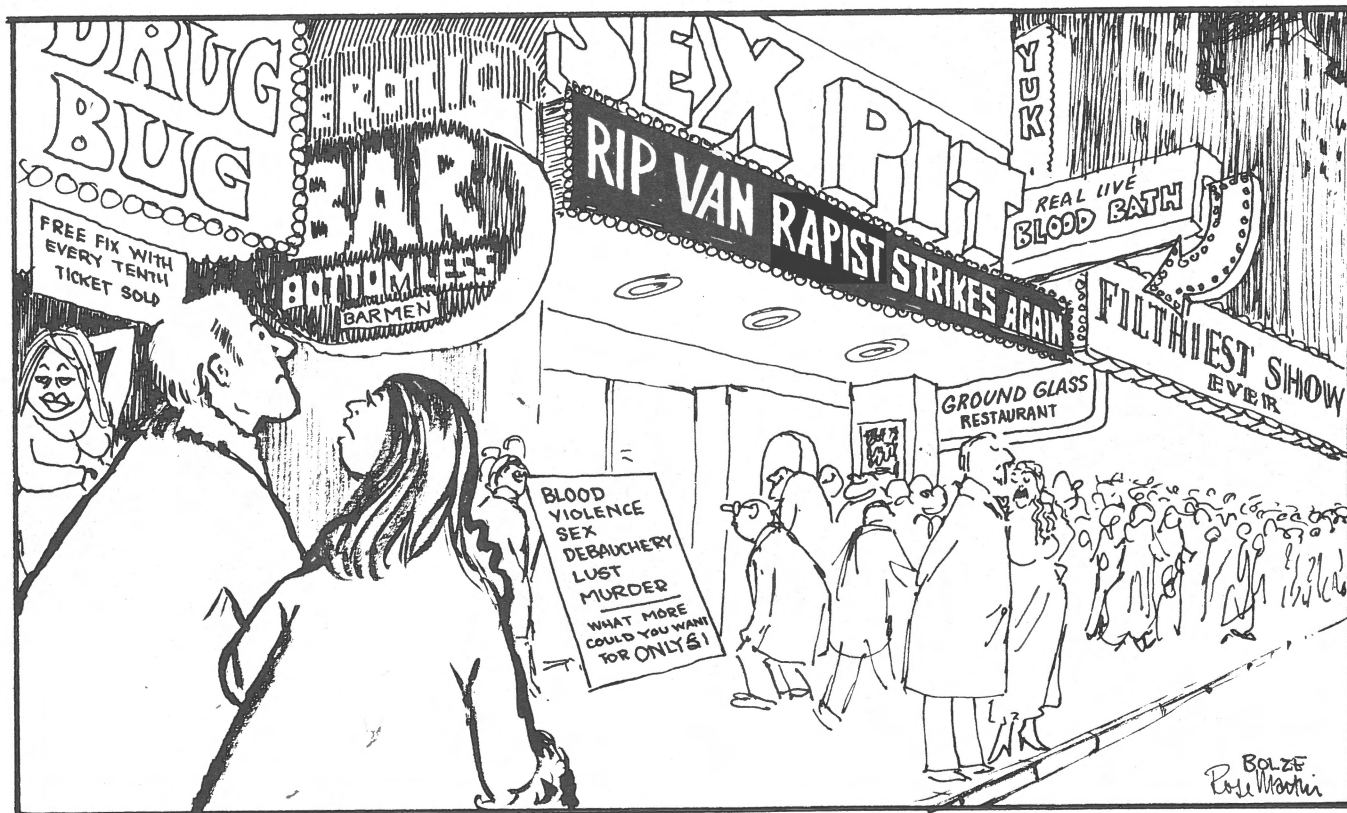
"It's no surprise to me. He's had twenty years' practise, drinking at Meikles every Saturday morning."



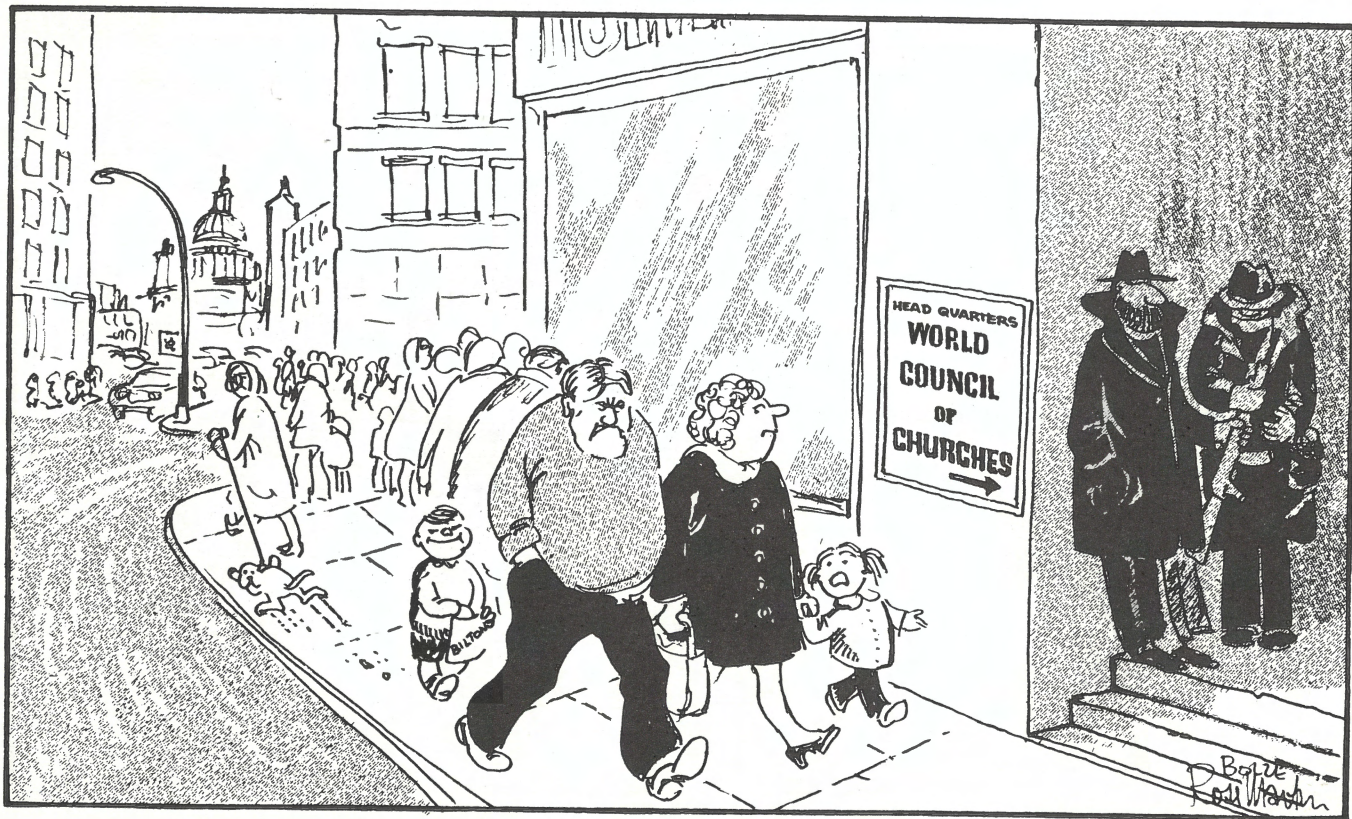
"If ye tell me ance mare that ye aye played in braw sunshine I'll get ye oot o' yer mental bunker wi' ma nine iron."



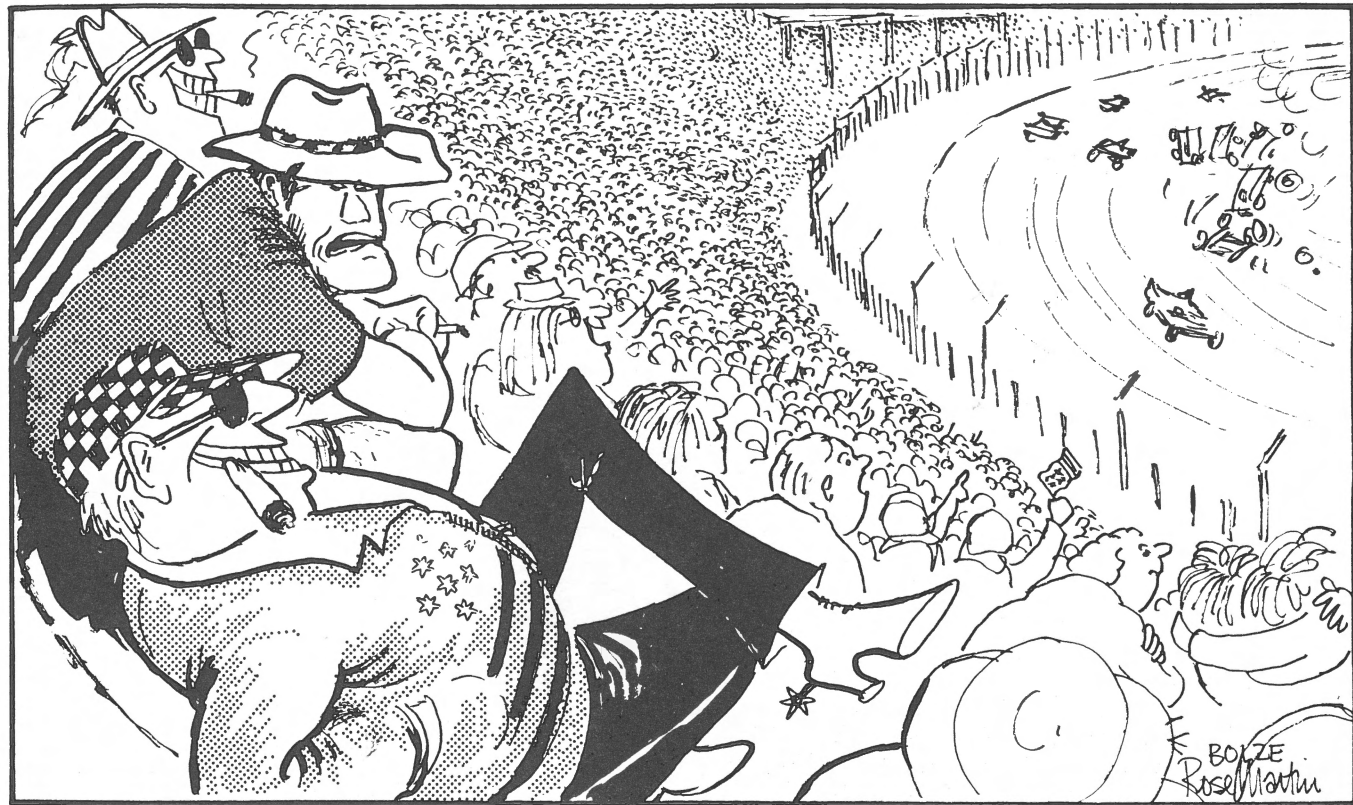
"So you're a refugee from Rhodesia. You've got to be joking."



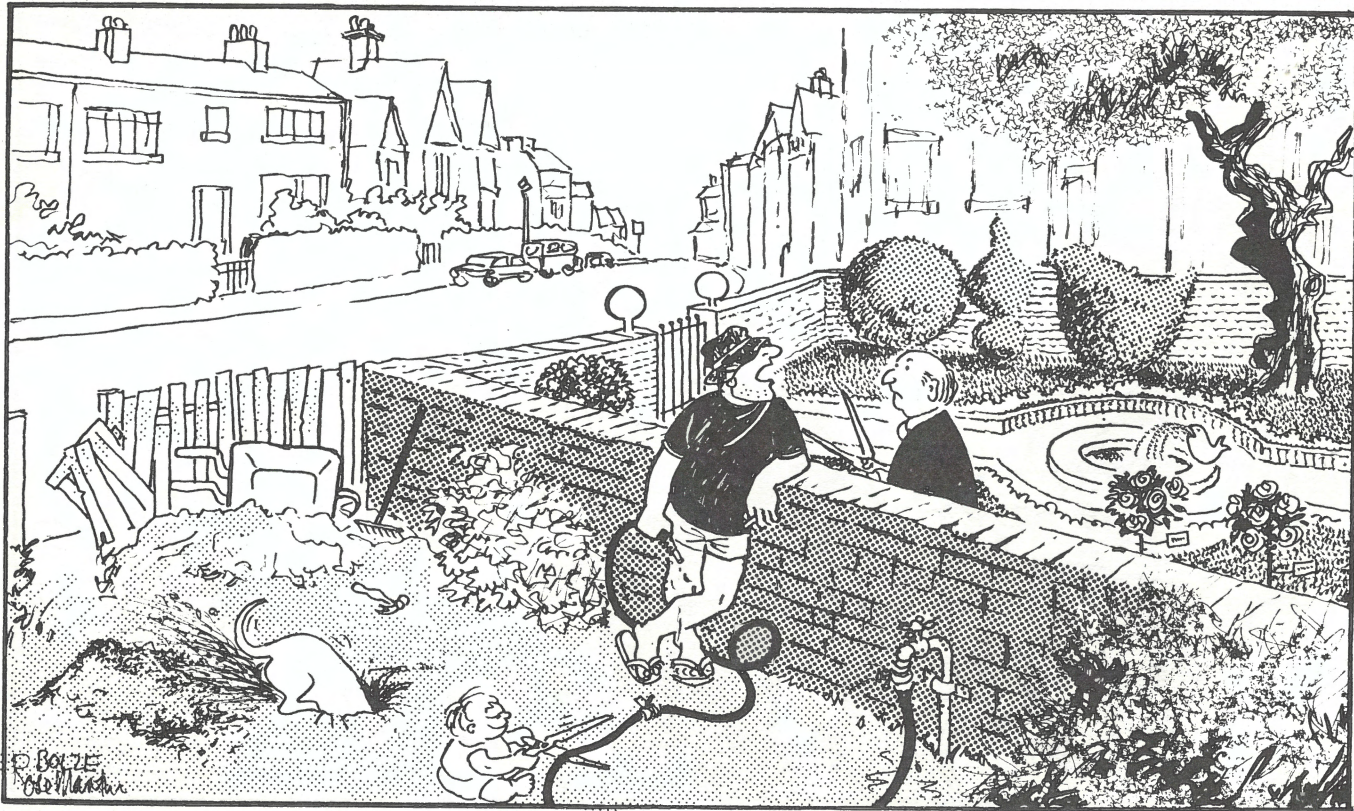
"What did Lord Blake say about Rhodesians living in 'a cultural desert'?"



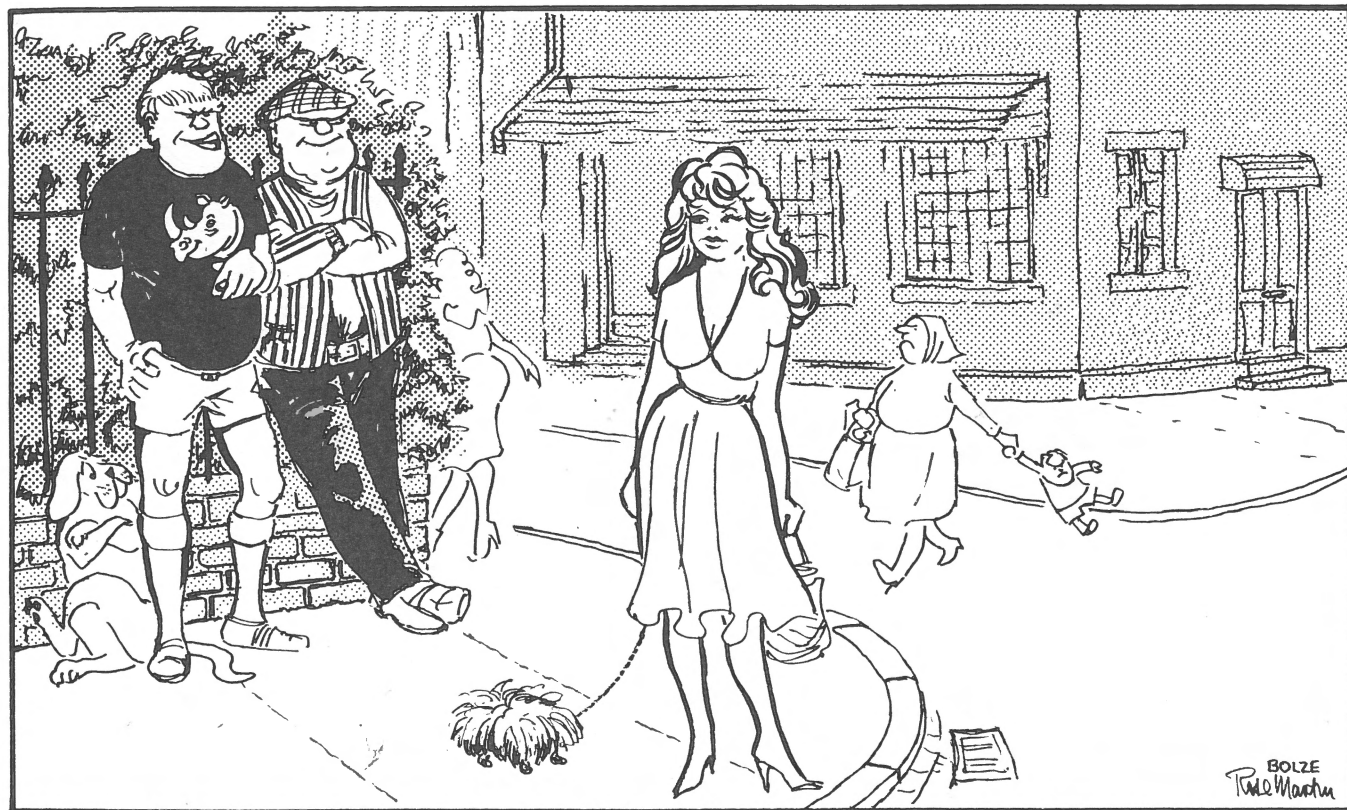
"Mummy, why does daddy always grit his teeth and grunt when we pass this place?"



"Sure we had grand prix racing . . . and stock-car racing . . . and go-karts . . . and horse-racing . . . and speedboats and water-ski-ing . . . and yachts . . . Do you think we lived in the bush?"

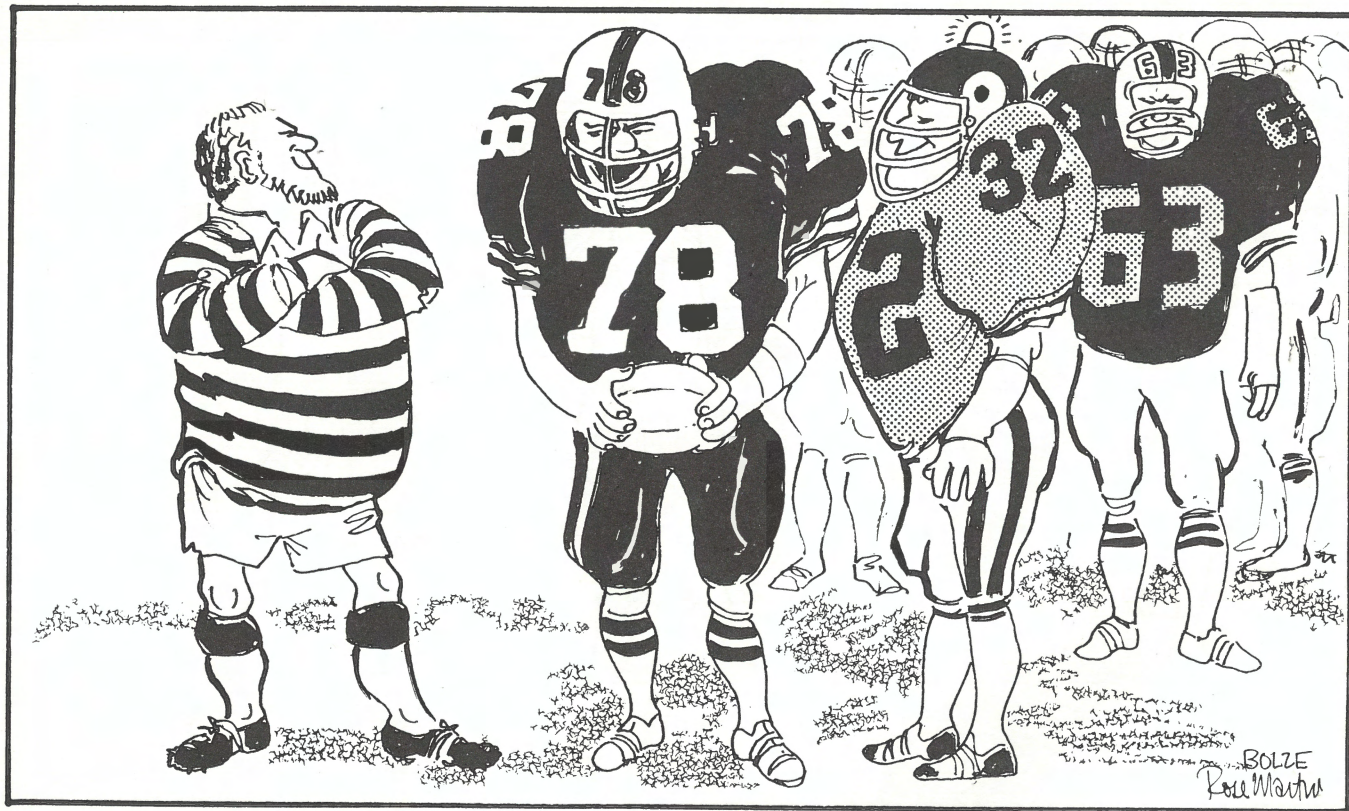


"Gardening back at Mukumbura in the old days was really tough, with army worm, queleas, locusts, mopani worm, boll worm, maggot fly, stalk borers, wild pig, baboons – the lot. You name them, we had them."



"A person? When we were in Rhodesia, man, we called them women. *Lekker, hey!"

*"Nice" (Afrikaans)



"OK, OK – so you never used to wear a helmet and padding."

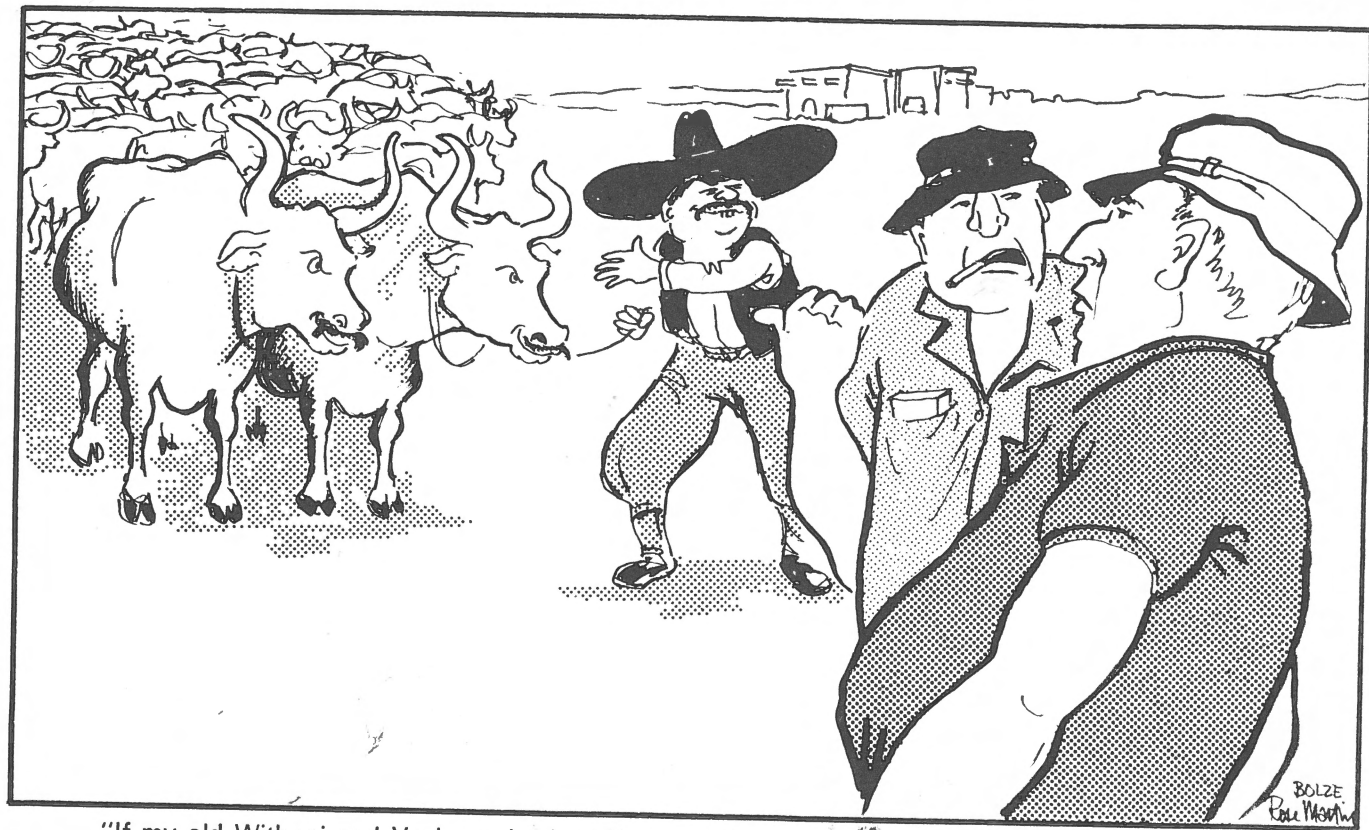


"Why should it remind you of your overhead spray back at Triangle?. Probably because you could never keep the pressure up."

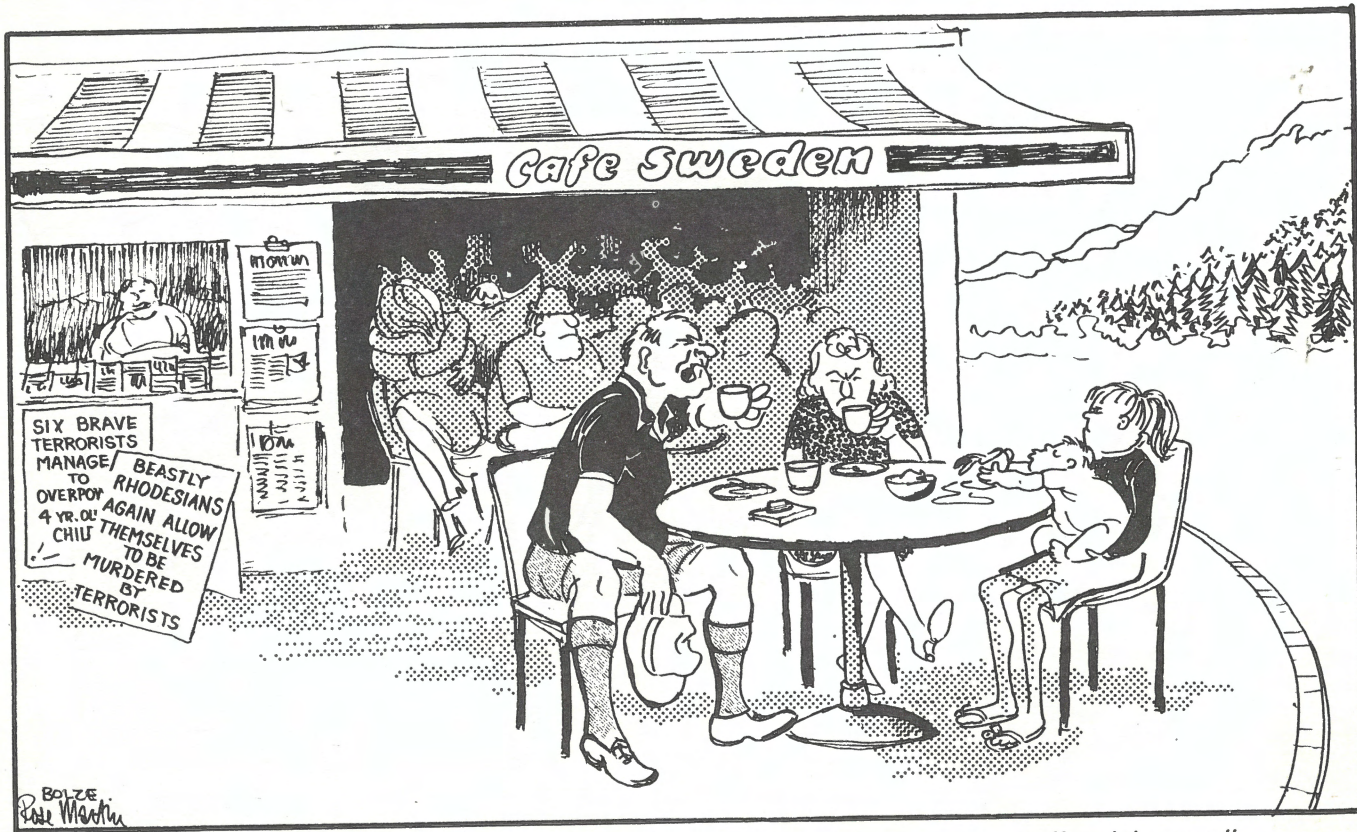


"But, of course, they're genuine *Sandawana. Did you never think of mixing them in with kosher, home-made, melon-and-ginger jam?"

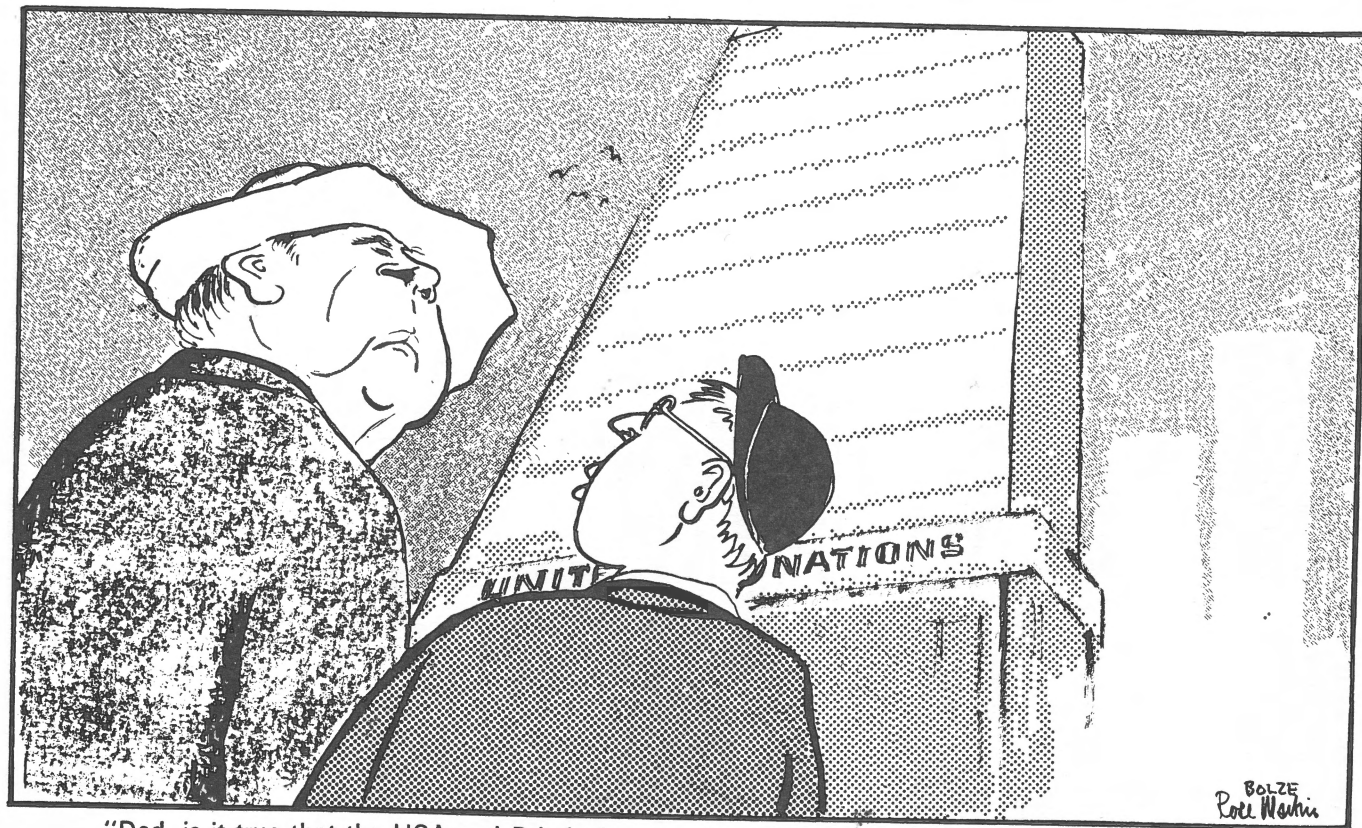
**Emerald*



"If my old Witbooi and Vaalpens back at Nuanetsi Ranch heard me calling these two Gonzales and Alphonse, they would take themselves straight to Liebig's canning factory."



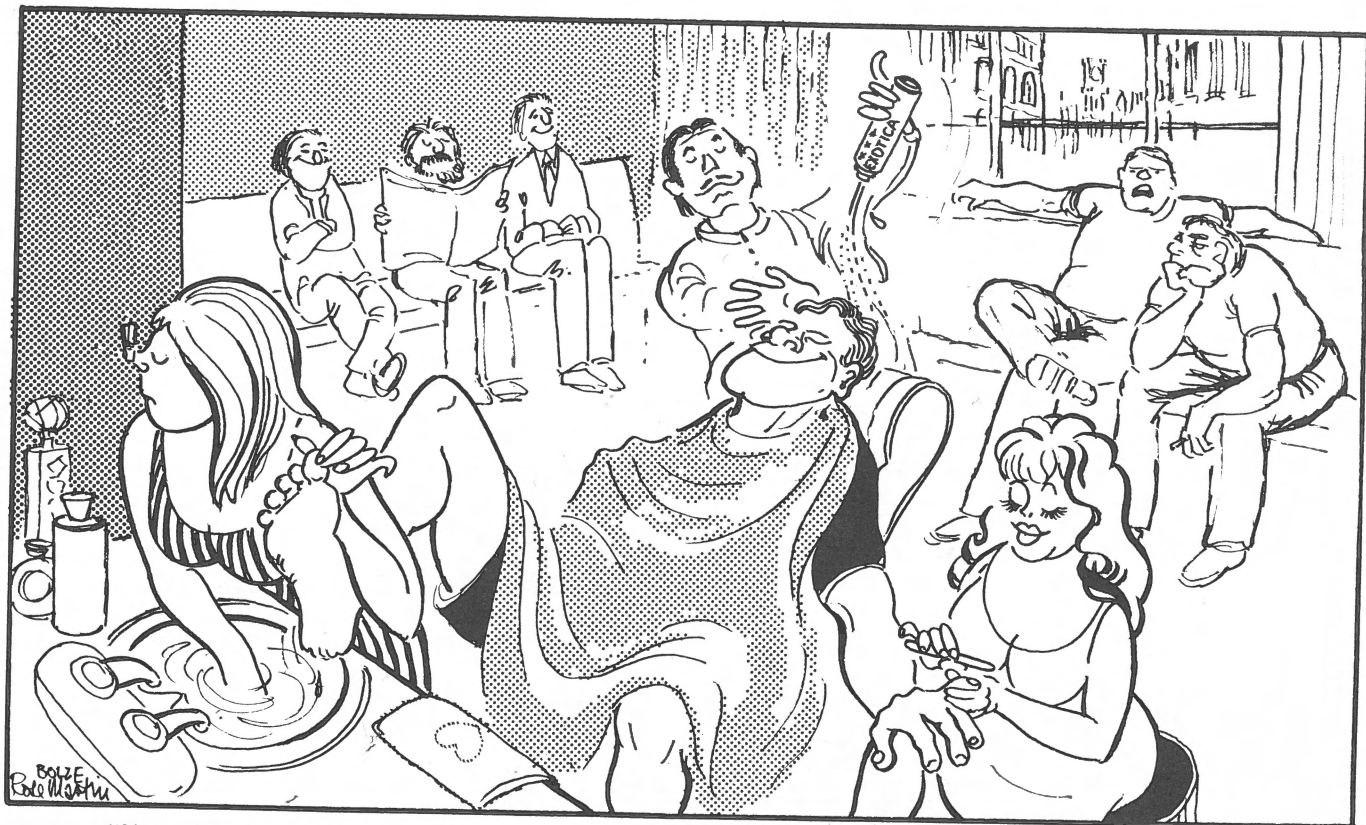
"Ugh, acorns again. What wouldn't I give for a cup of Chippinga-grown coffee right now."



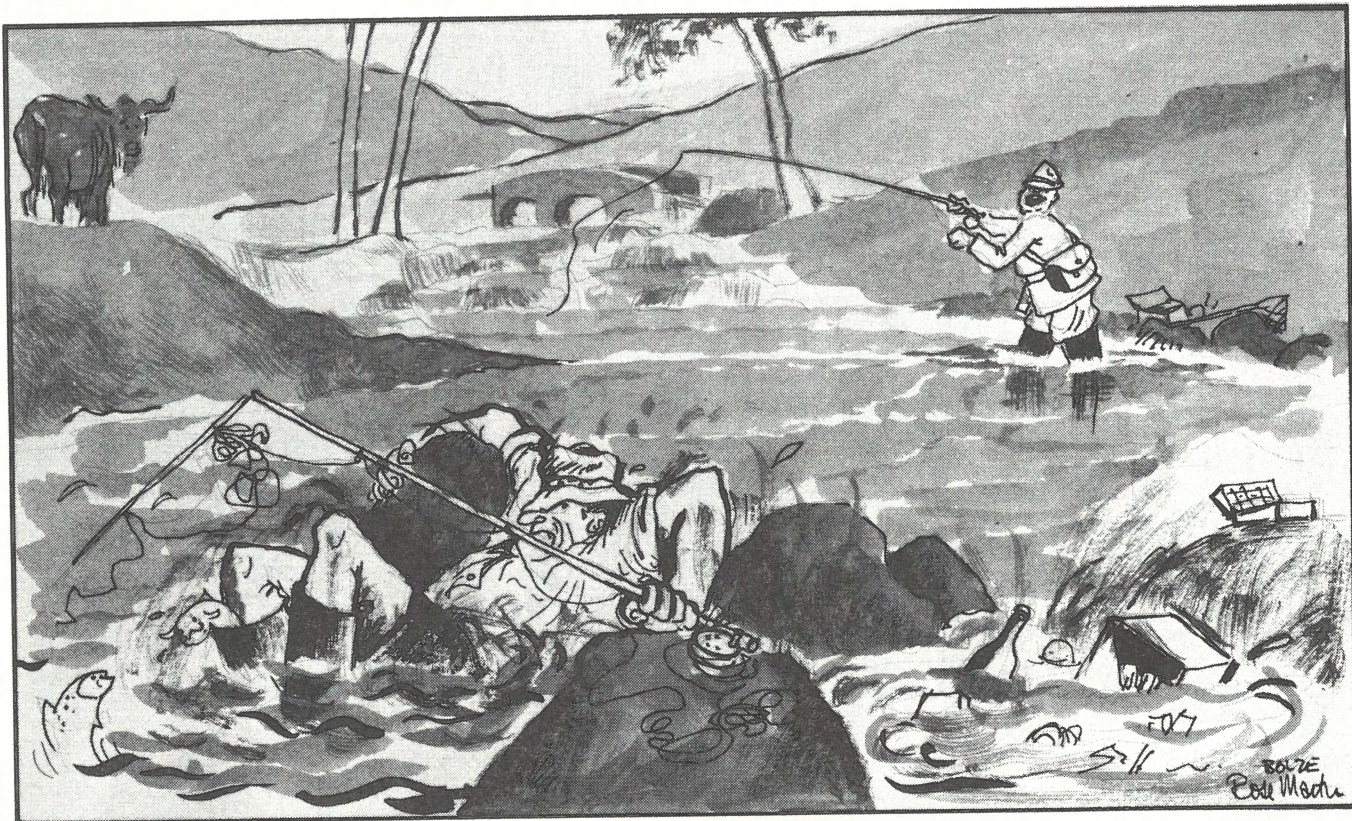
"Dad, is it true that the USA and Britain have made a deal with the Russians not to oppose the Marxists in their designs to take over in southern Africa?"



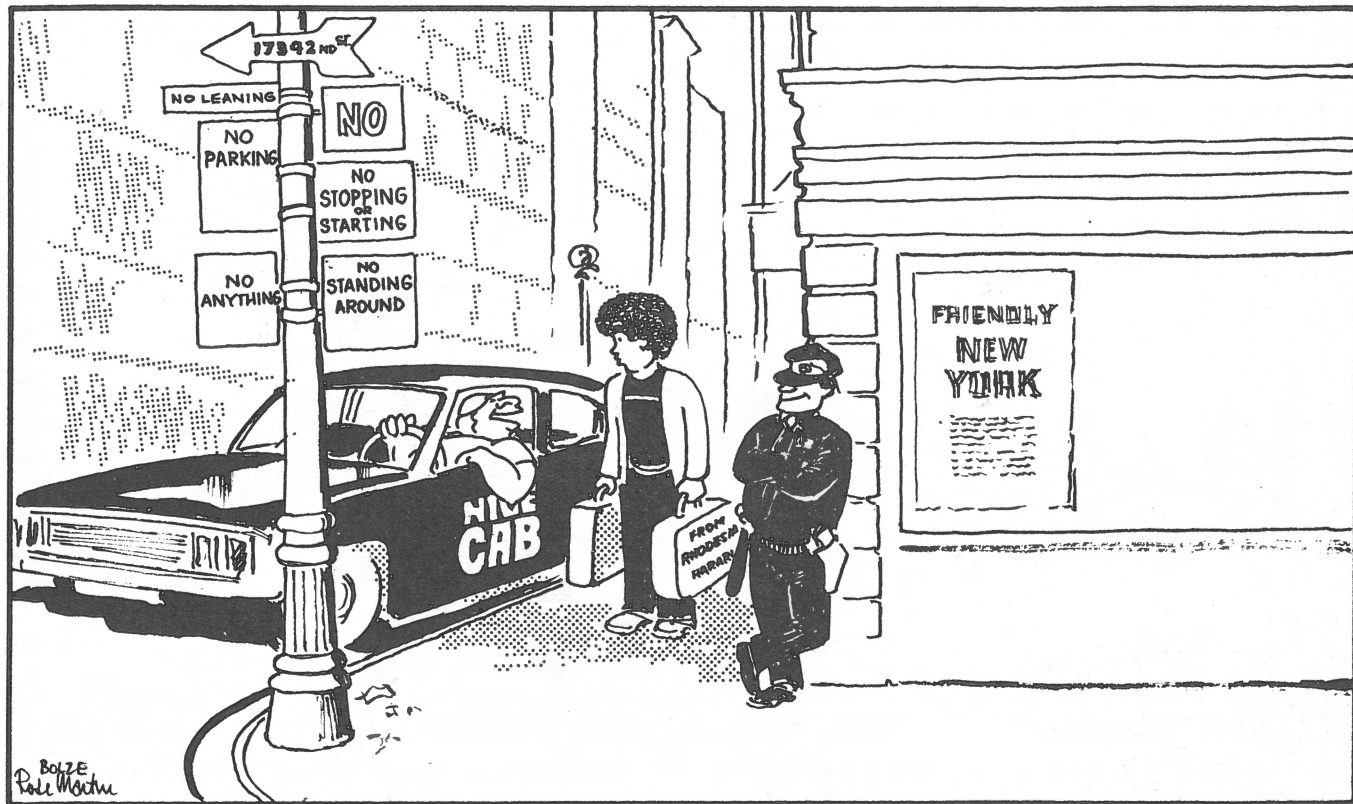
"Psst . . . Want to buy some Rhodesian postage stamps?"



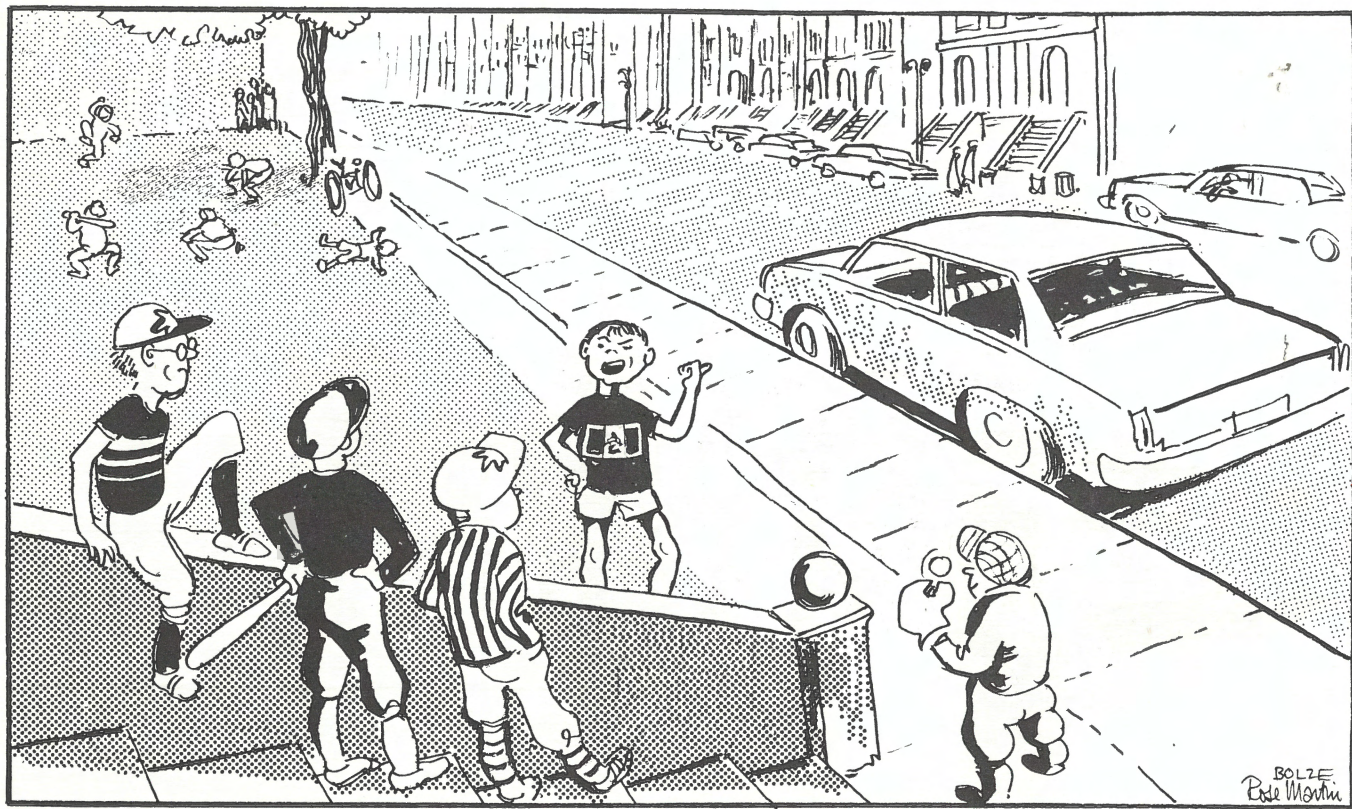
"Now that he's been demobbed from the Selous Scouts and no longer has to smell like a terr, he's become most particular about his *toilette*."



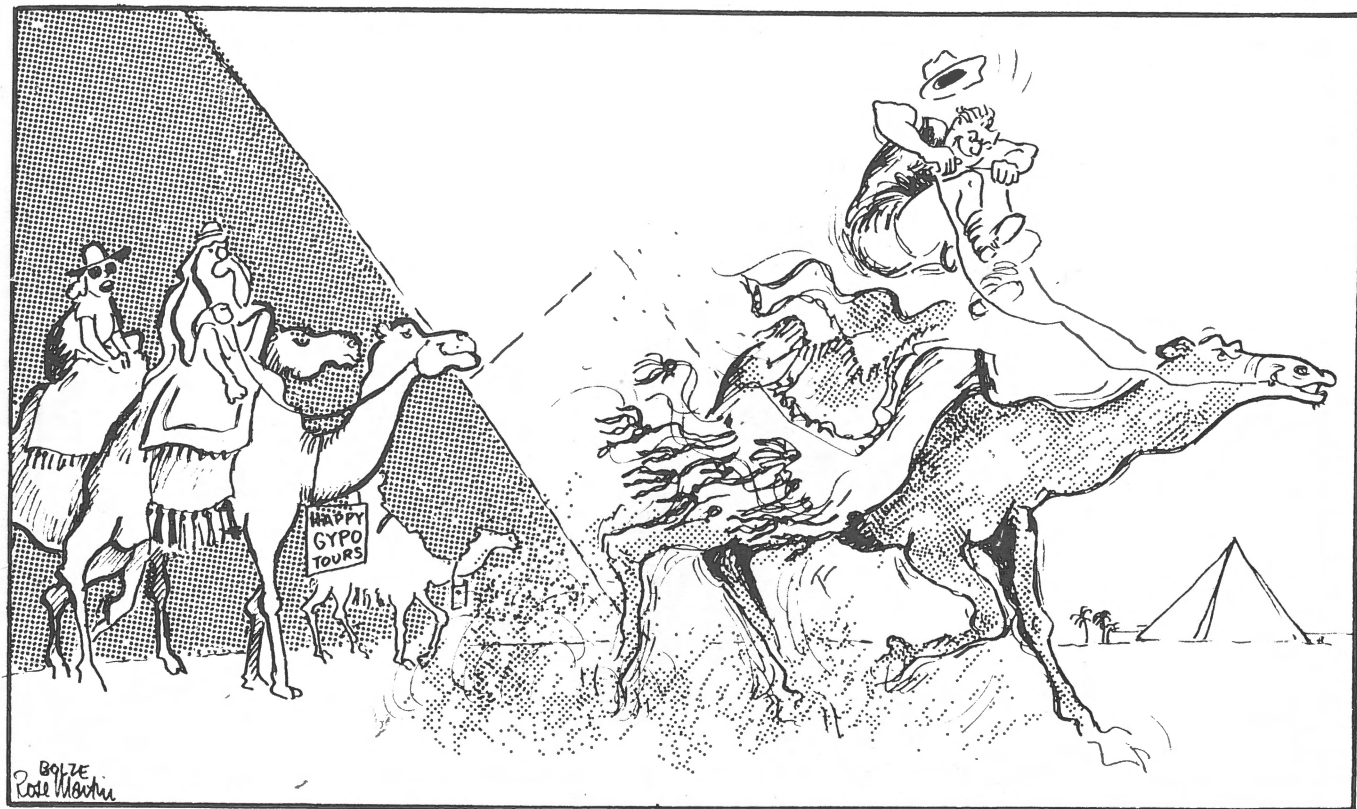
"When you were in Rhodesia you may well have hauled twenty tiger fish a day out of Lake Kariba but here we like to cultivate the gentler art of luring our trout."



"Where's Fifth Avenue? Where it's always been; where else?"



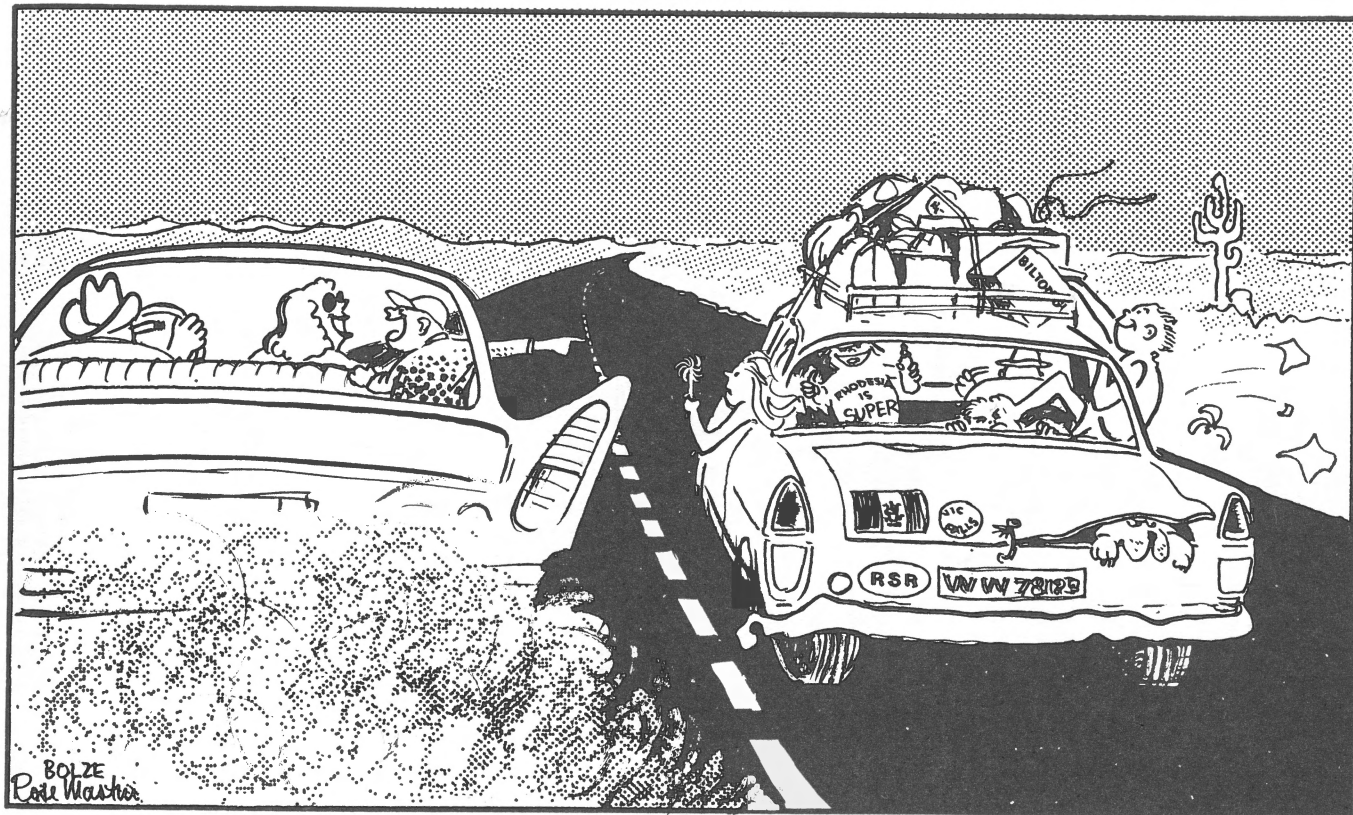
" . . . and they're 'lifts' not 'elevators' . . . and that's a 'car' . . . anyway, I used to play rugby at school not your sissy rounders."



"He's perfectly at home in the saddle ; he was with the Grey Scouts, for three years."



"He still wears it to the local once a week in the hope that one of his cronies from Rhodesia will spot him."



"Look ma, a real Whenwe from Rhodesia."

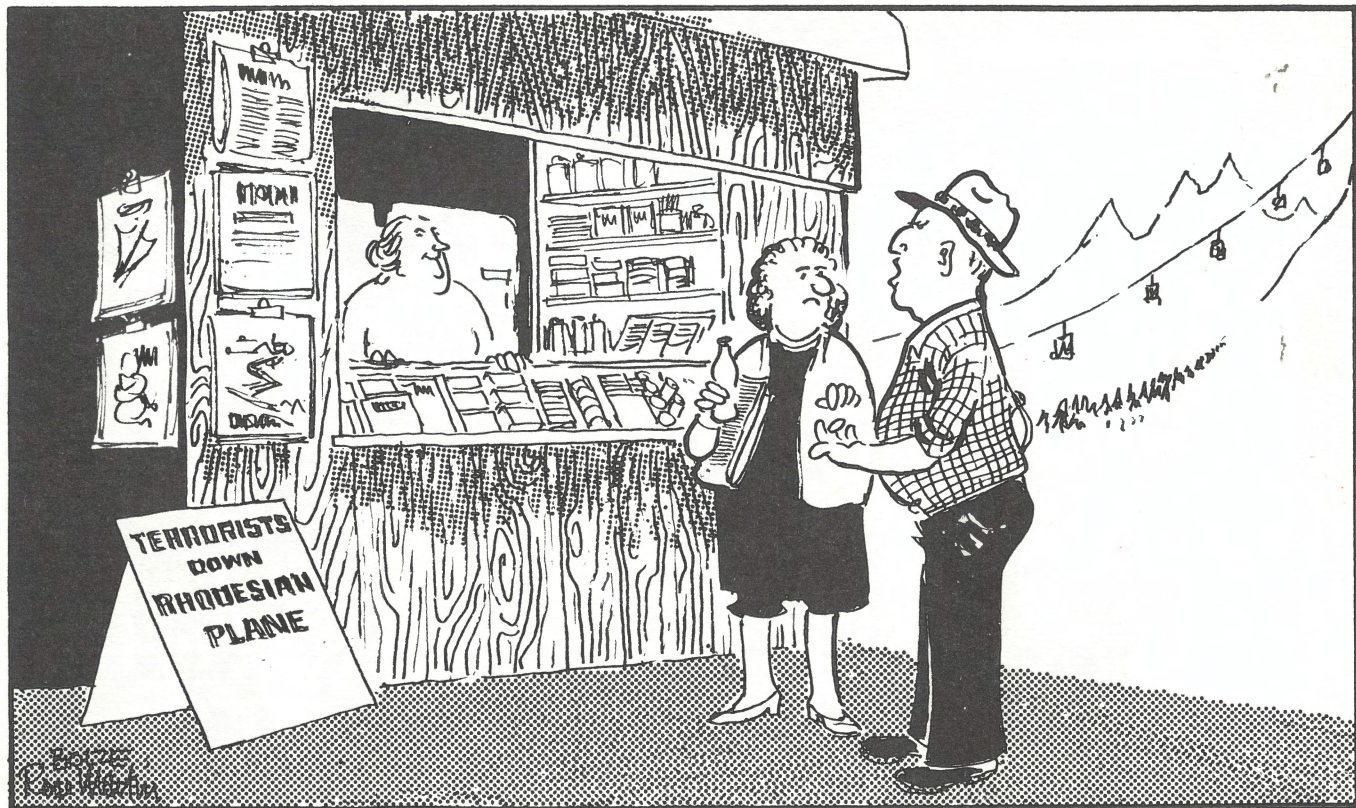


"Look what I've just found: my missing November petrol coupon."

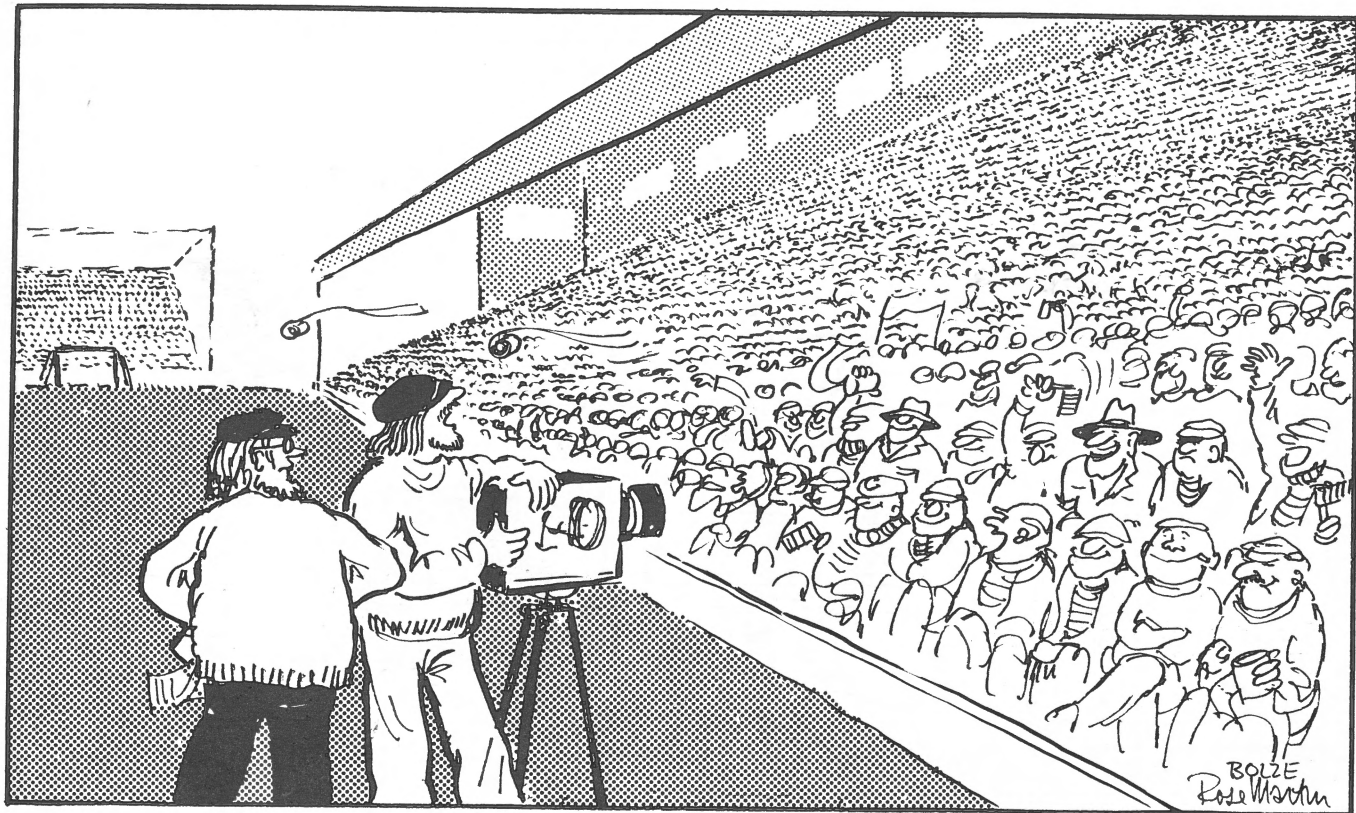


"Man, over here you can't tell the chicks from the *ouens."

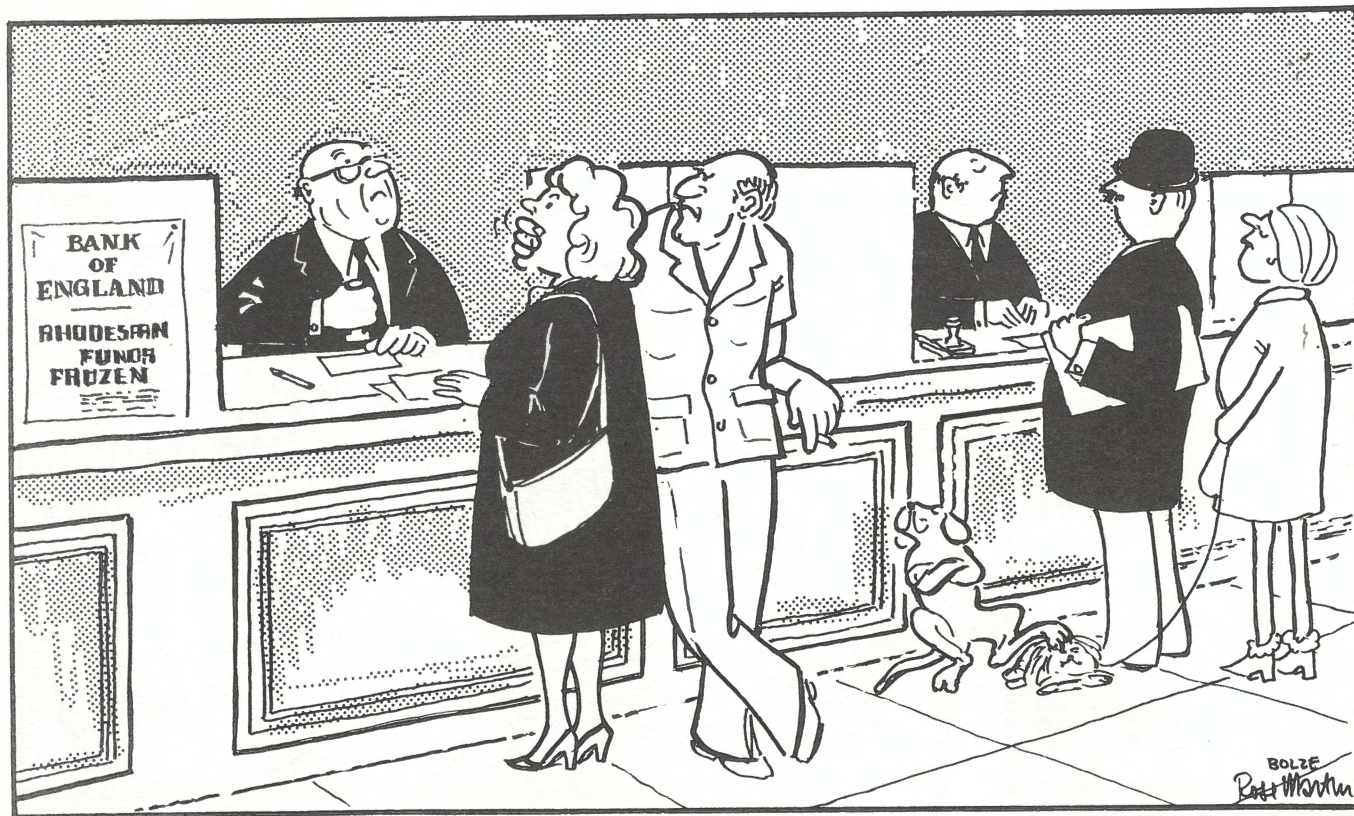
*Chaps – (Afrikaans corruption)



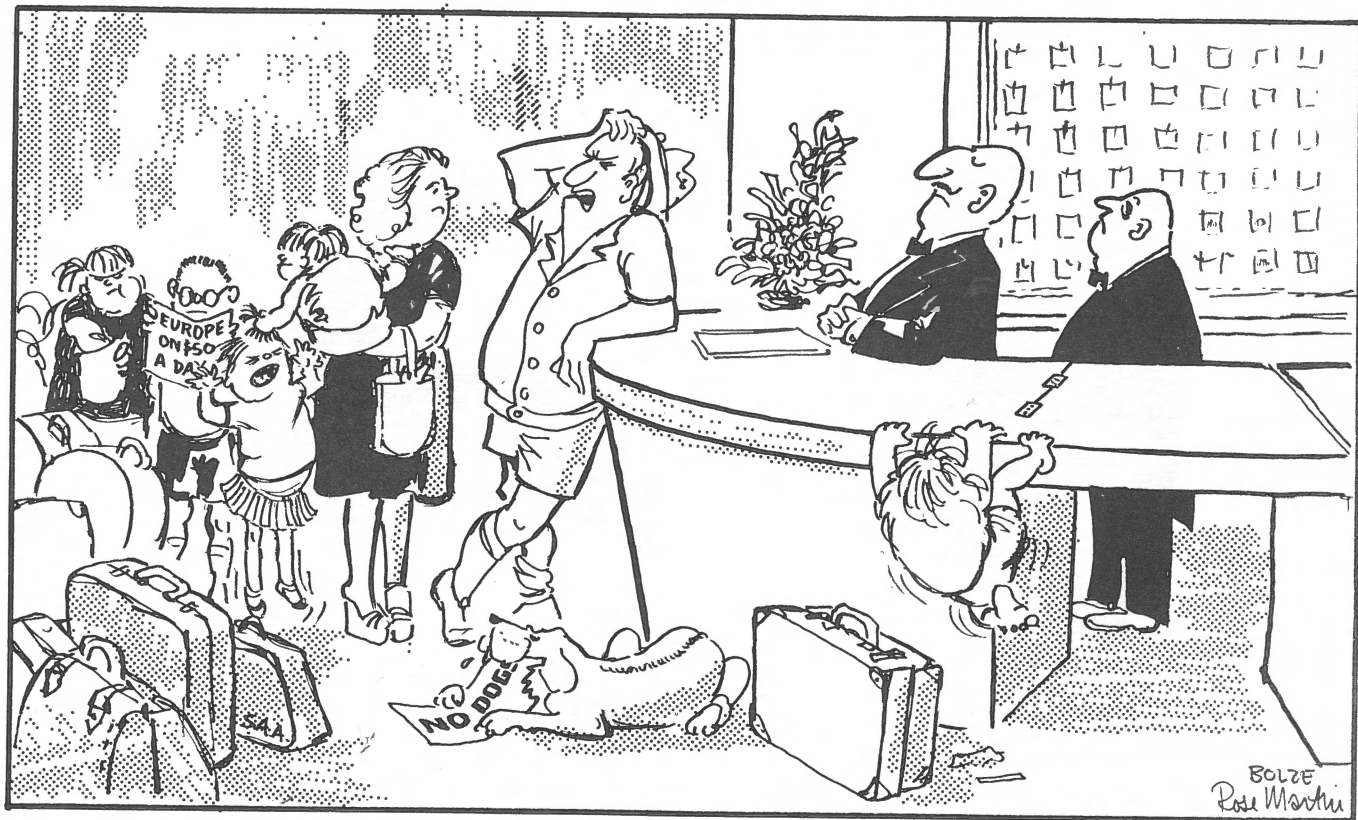
"95c for the paper and \$1.25 for the Coke. You've got to be joking."



"You can pick 'em out a mile away."



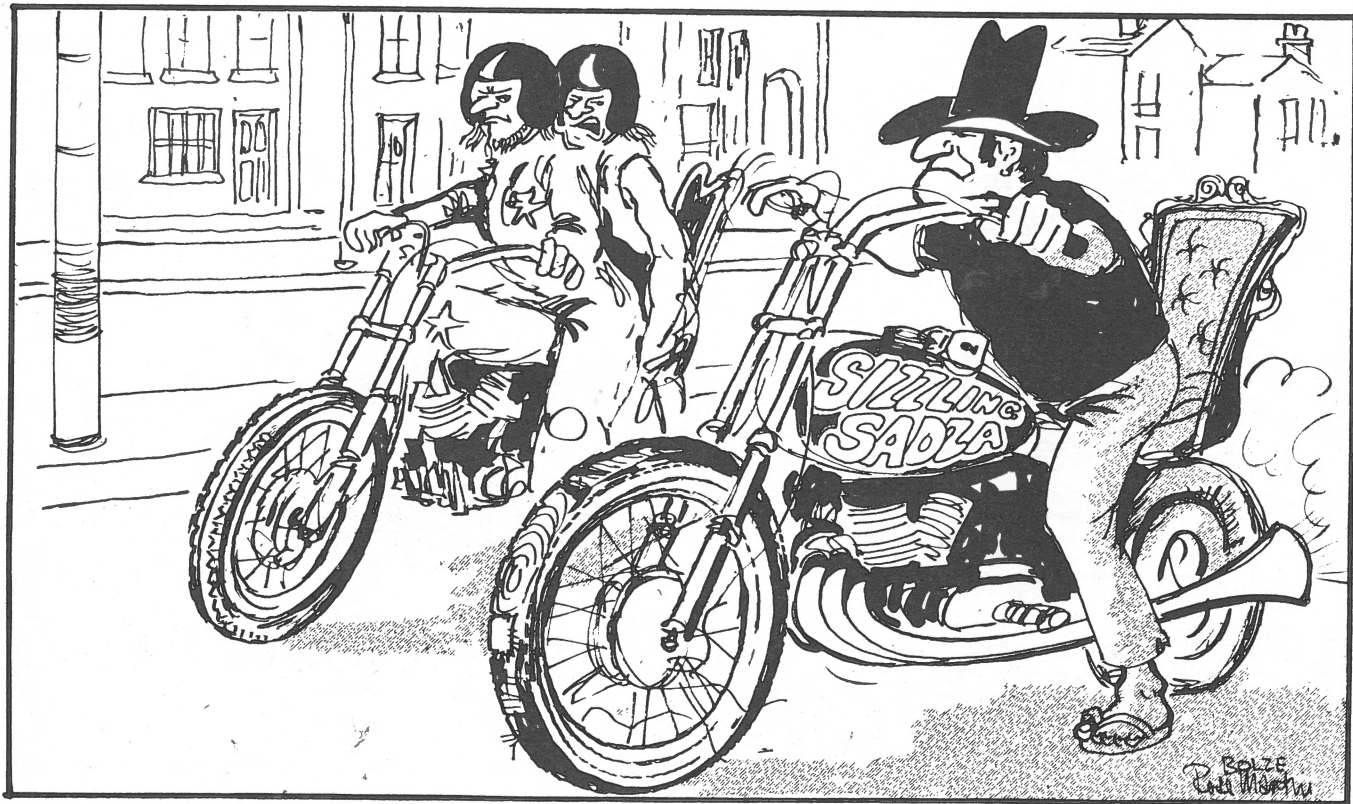
"When we . . . glug, glug . . ."



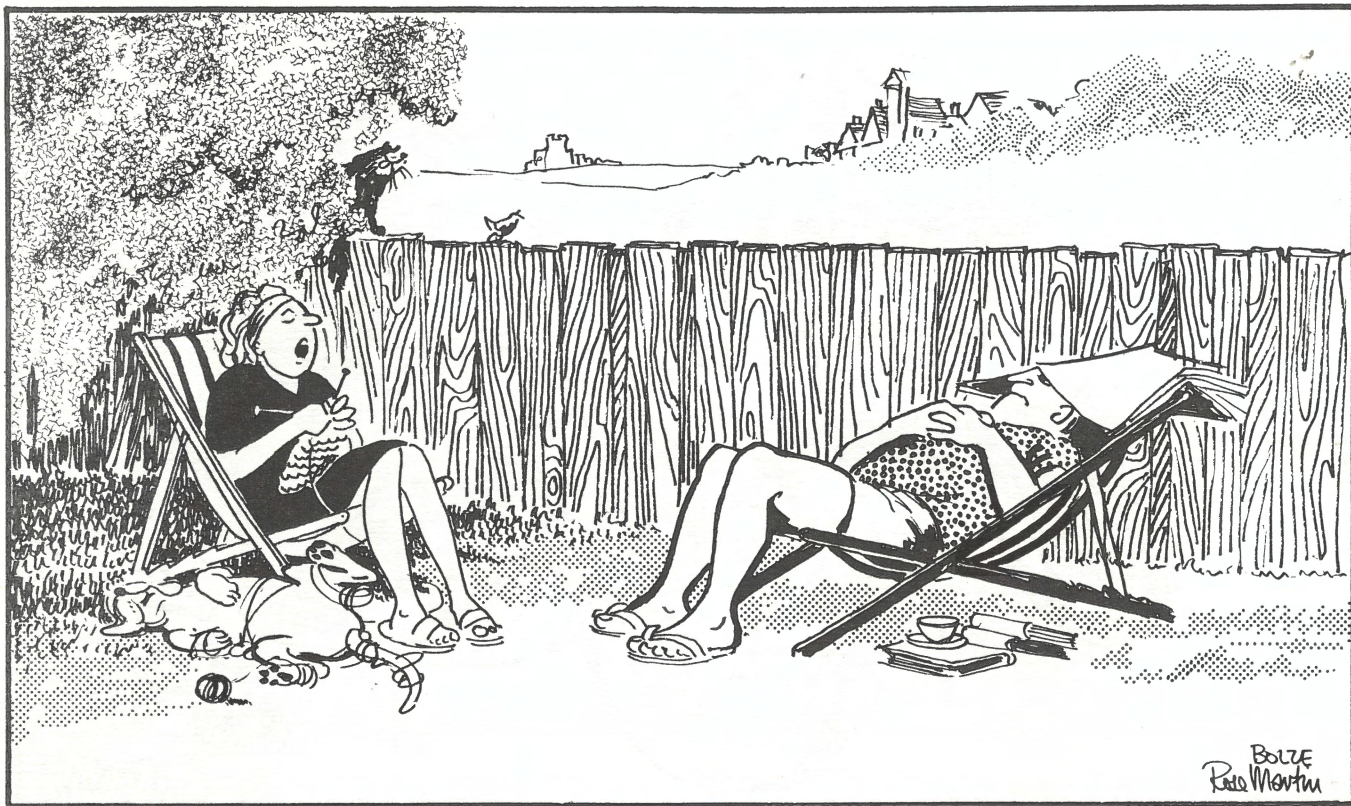
"... per bed and breakfast, inclusive of sales tax. When we were in Rhodesia we paid that for the whole family on a Super Six."



"A four-letter word?: 'Sanctimonious, arrogant and ignorant, pro-Marxist, British political amateur . . . ' Couldn't you think of something more subtle."



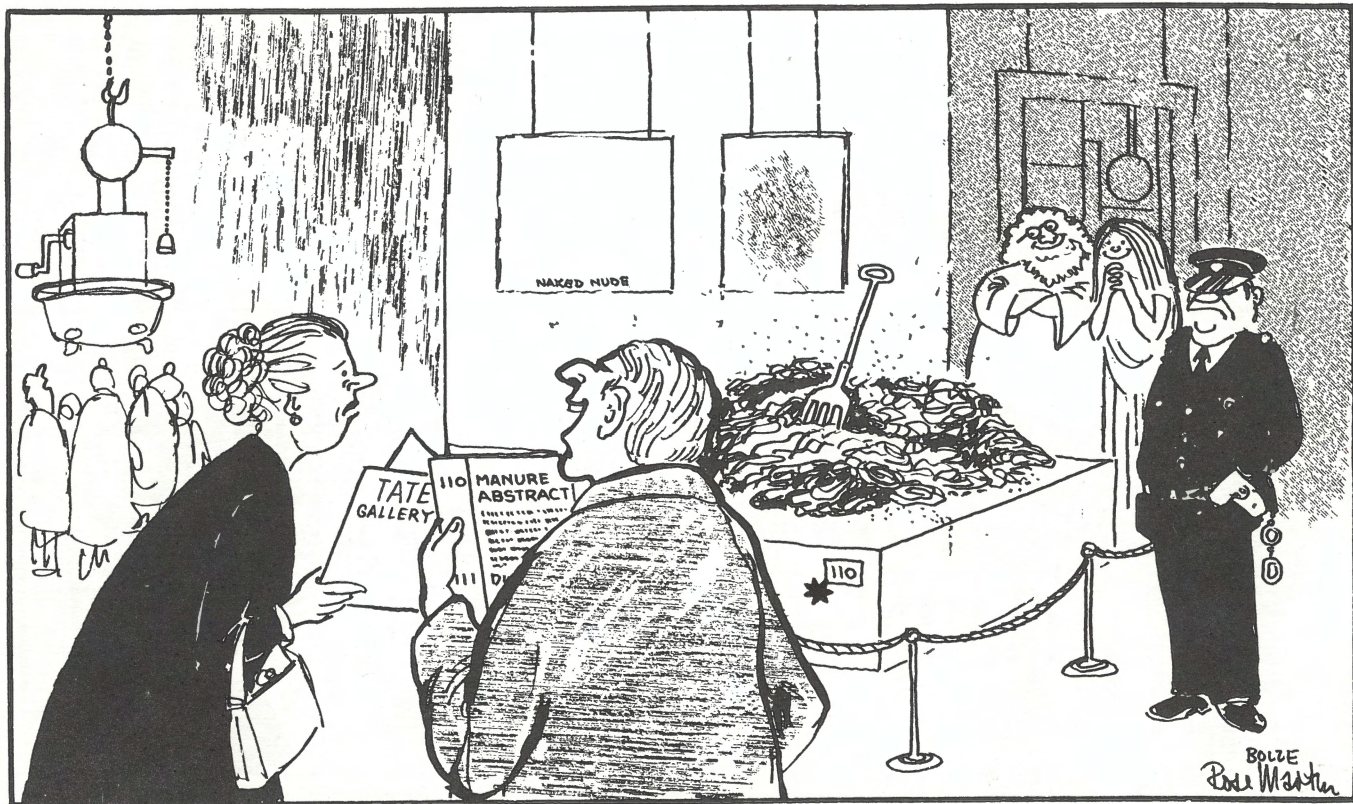
"I believe he's from First Street, Salisbury."



"It will soon be coming up for Rhodes and Founders, dear. Where should we go this year?"



"You've got to hand it to these chaps. They never give up, do they."

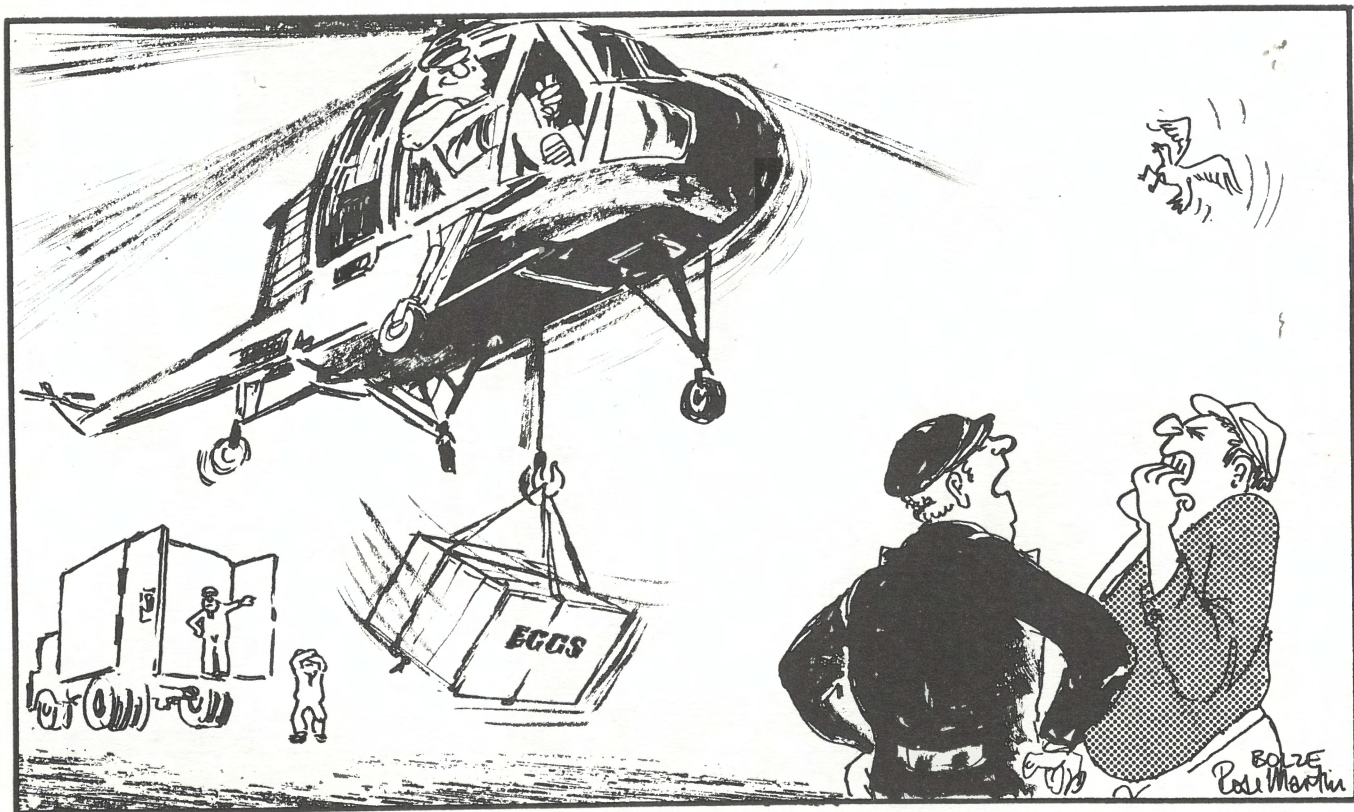


"Remember the super lawn we had at Chiredzi, and the prize we won for our dahlias at the Gatooma Show?"



"Exactly what do you mean when you say that in Rhodesia you spent most of your time working in a *sensitive area?"

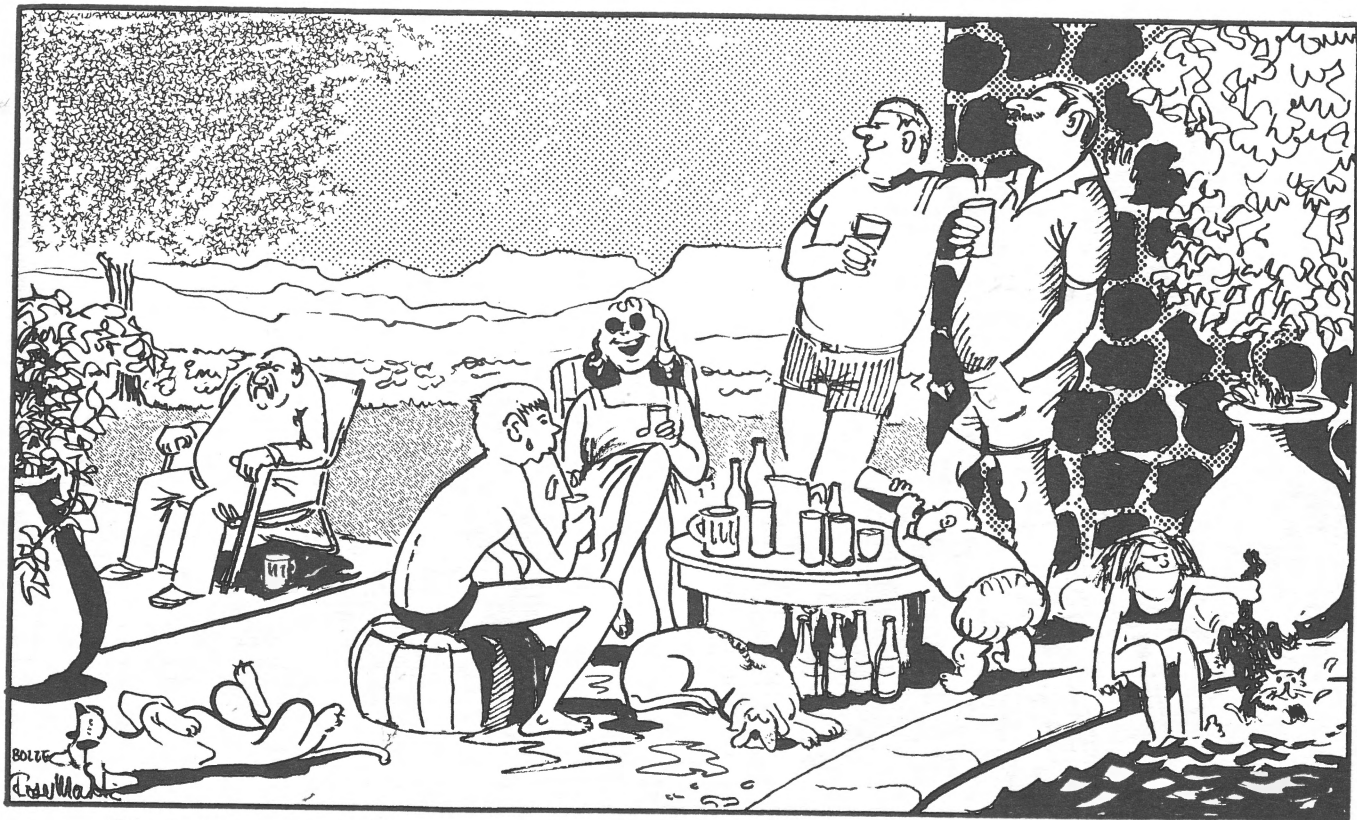
**Area prone to terrorist attack*



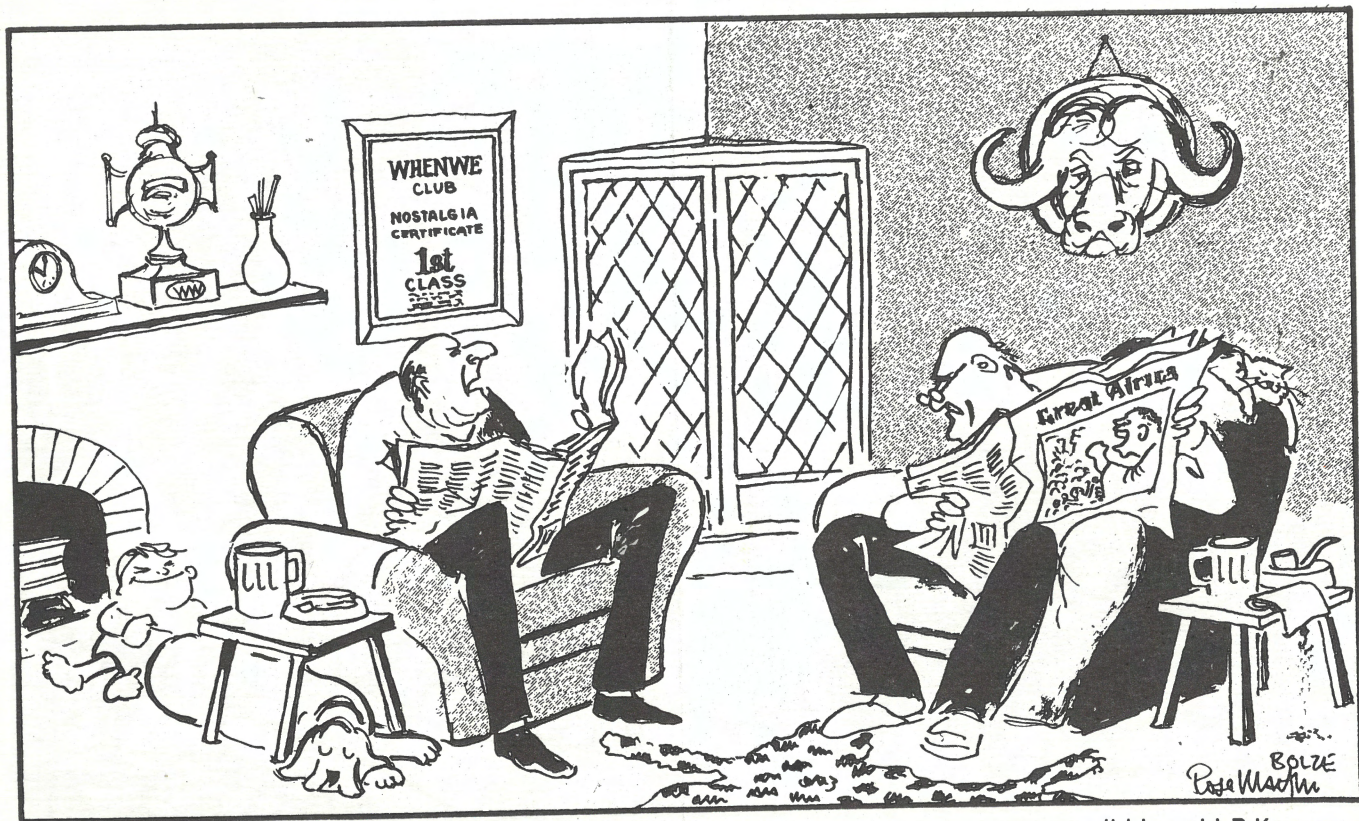
"Not to worry, he could land his chopper on a *gomo in a howling gale in the middle of the †sticks
... he was in the Rhodesian Air Force for six years."

*Kopje, hill

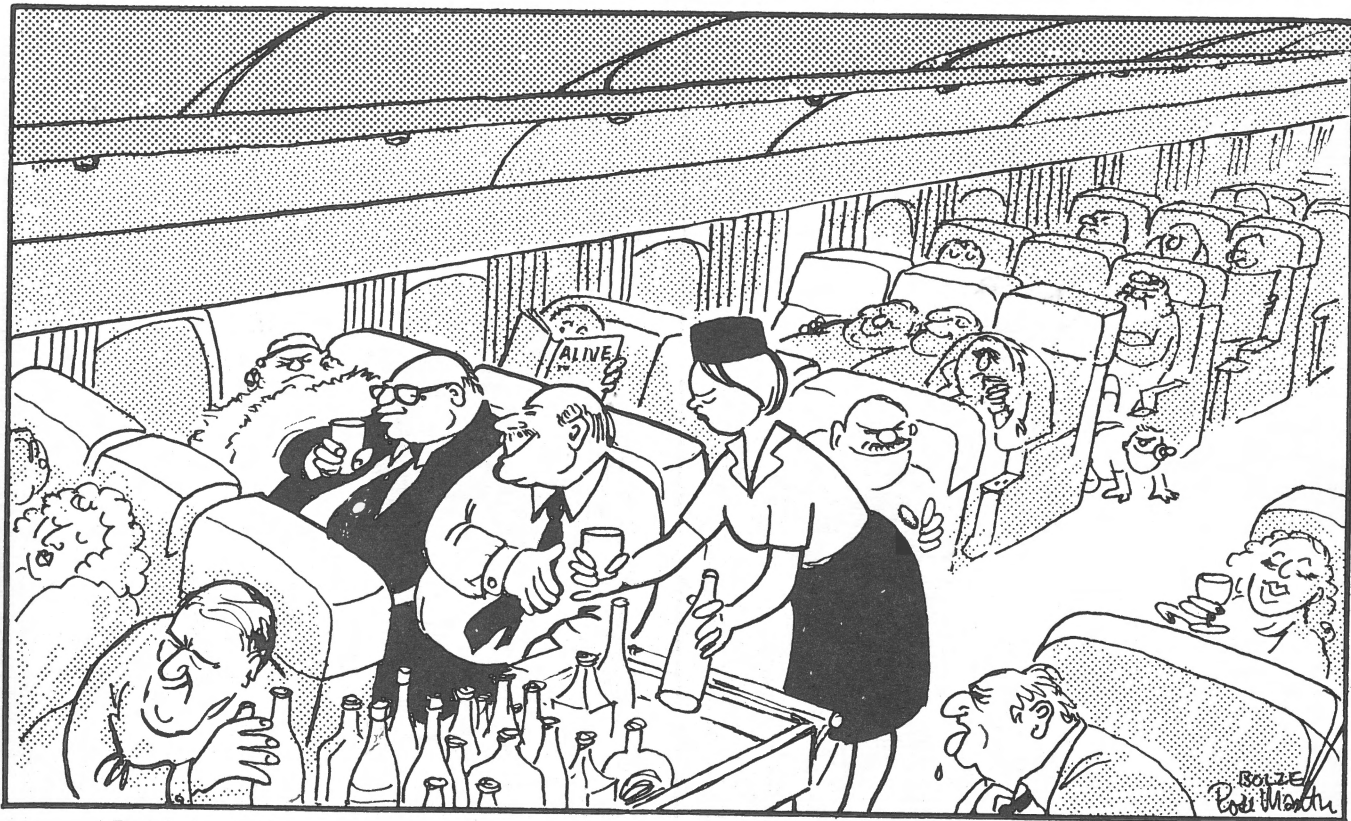
†remote bush area



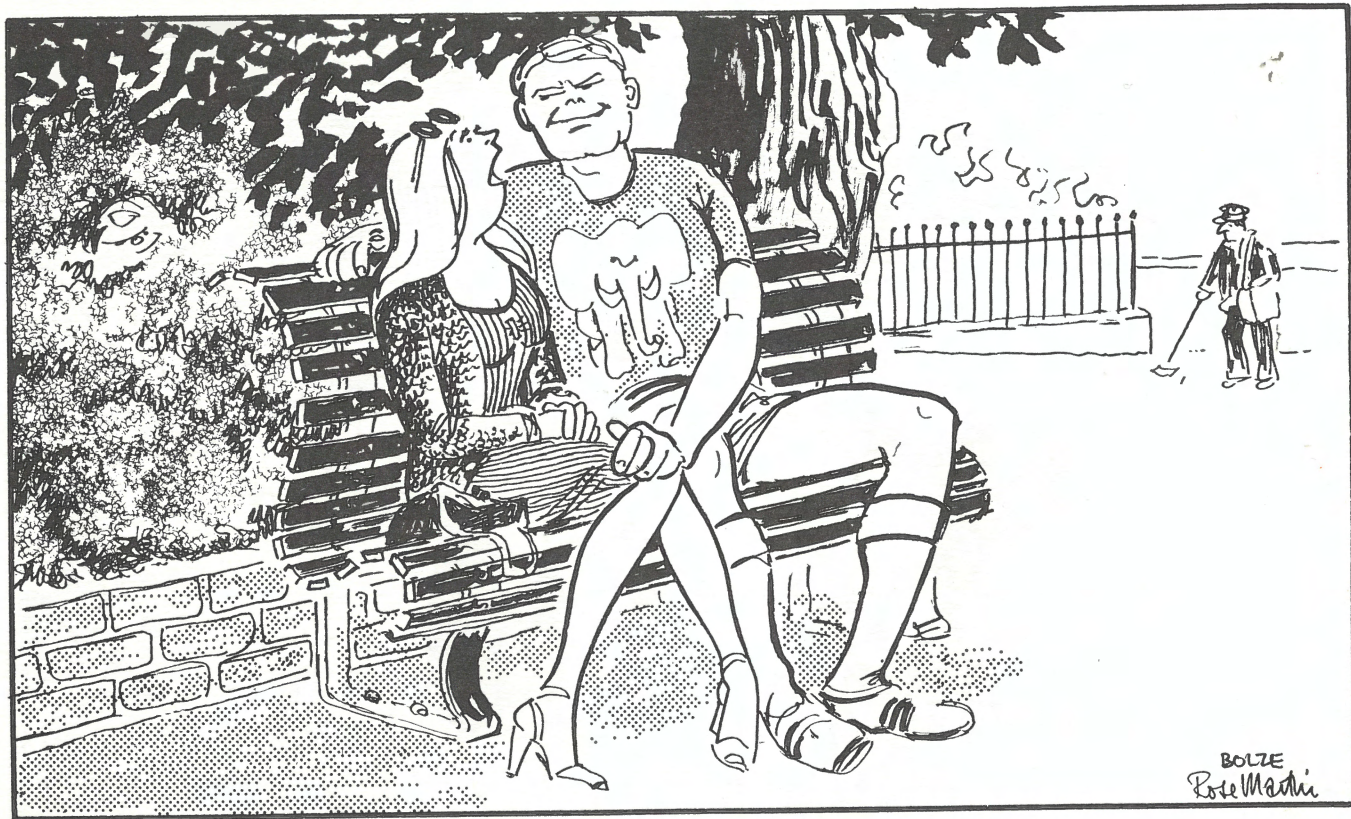
"Remember when old Harold what's-his-name was spouting on TV about Britain's five principles, and grandpa got up and shook his fist and said 'the British government has no principles . . . only expedients . . . and there'll be as many of them as it's expedient for them to think up'."



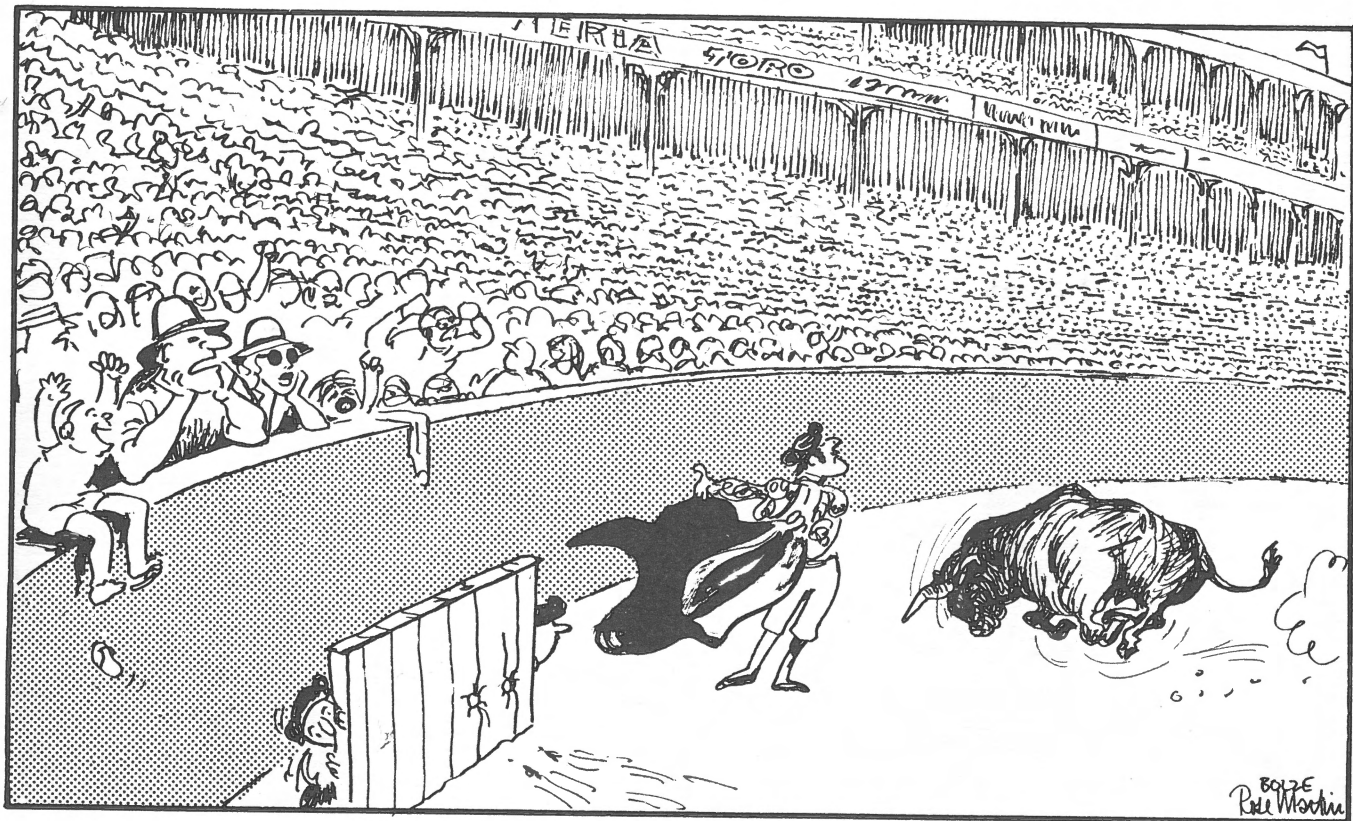
"Remember the times when you used to be able to laugh at newspaper cartoons ribbing old P.K. and our other politicians?"



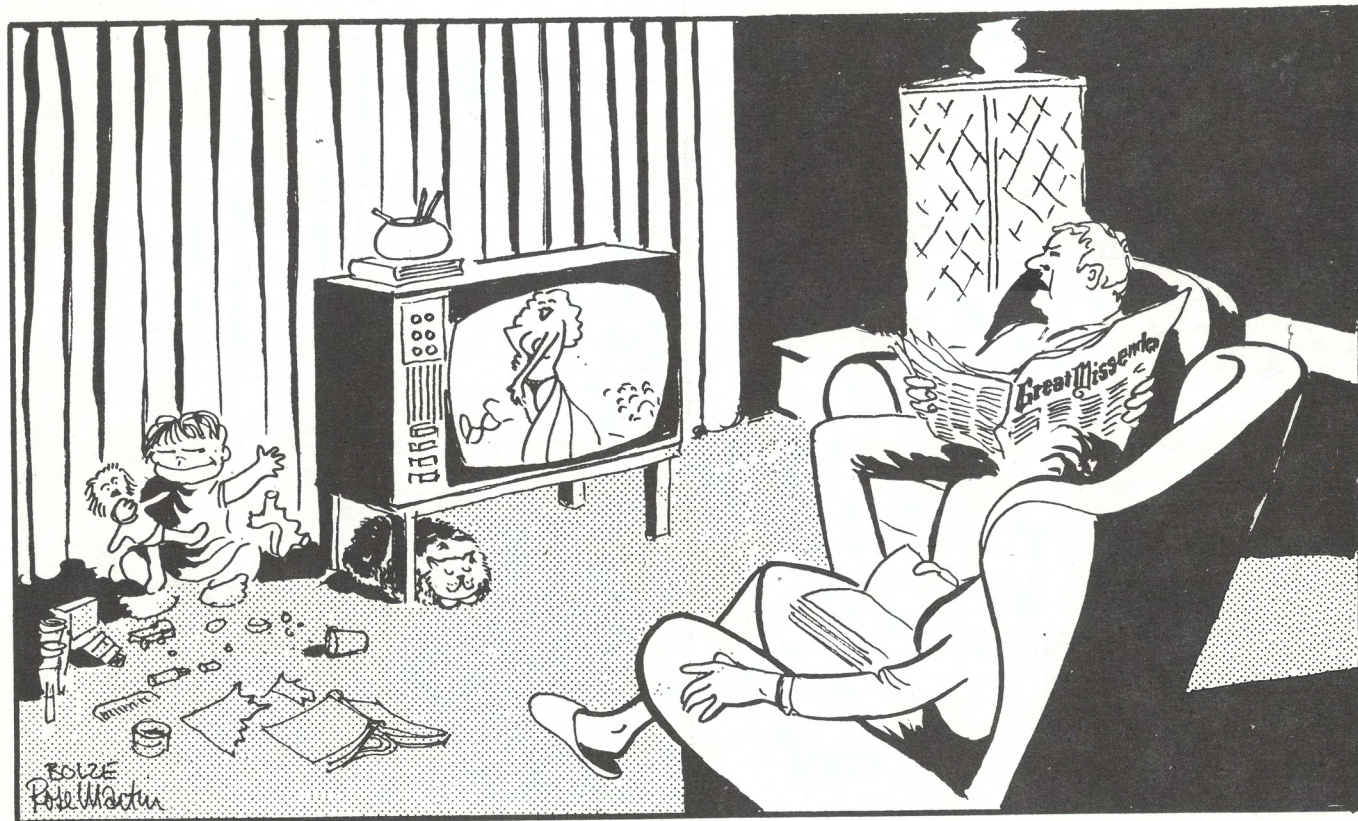
"Reminds me how we used to try to beat the poker school up front, to a third one before touch-down in Bulawayo on the 6 o'clock flight from Salisbury."



"Why do you sit there grinning and muttering, 'Contact, contact'?"



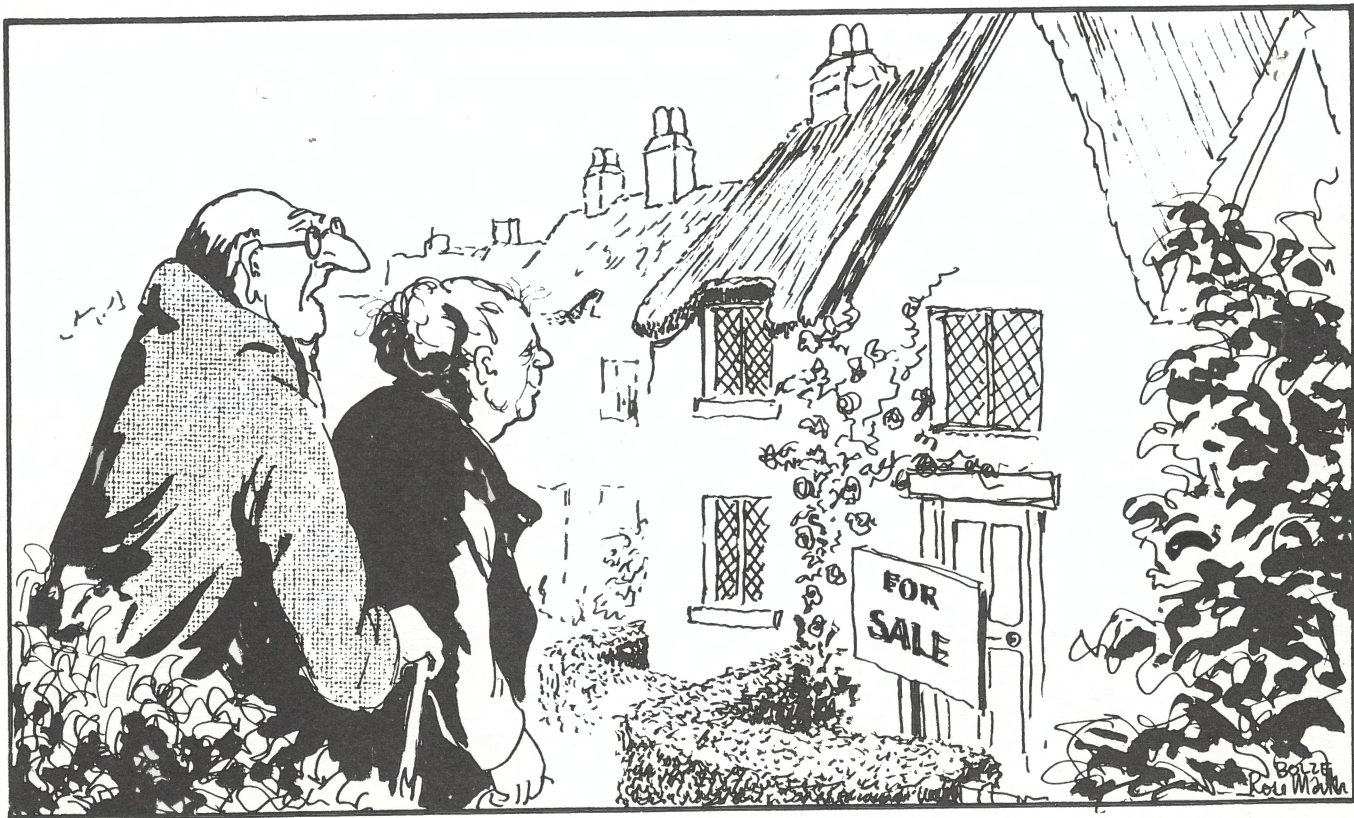
"Reminds me of the old Brahman bull we had down at Plumtree."



"I certainly miss all the news about call-ups, the terrors, currency swindles, price hikes, speeding fines, MPs' pay increases, and all that . . . must be getting home-sick."



"I used to have to use a step-ladder to inspect mine."



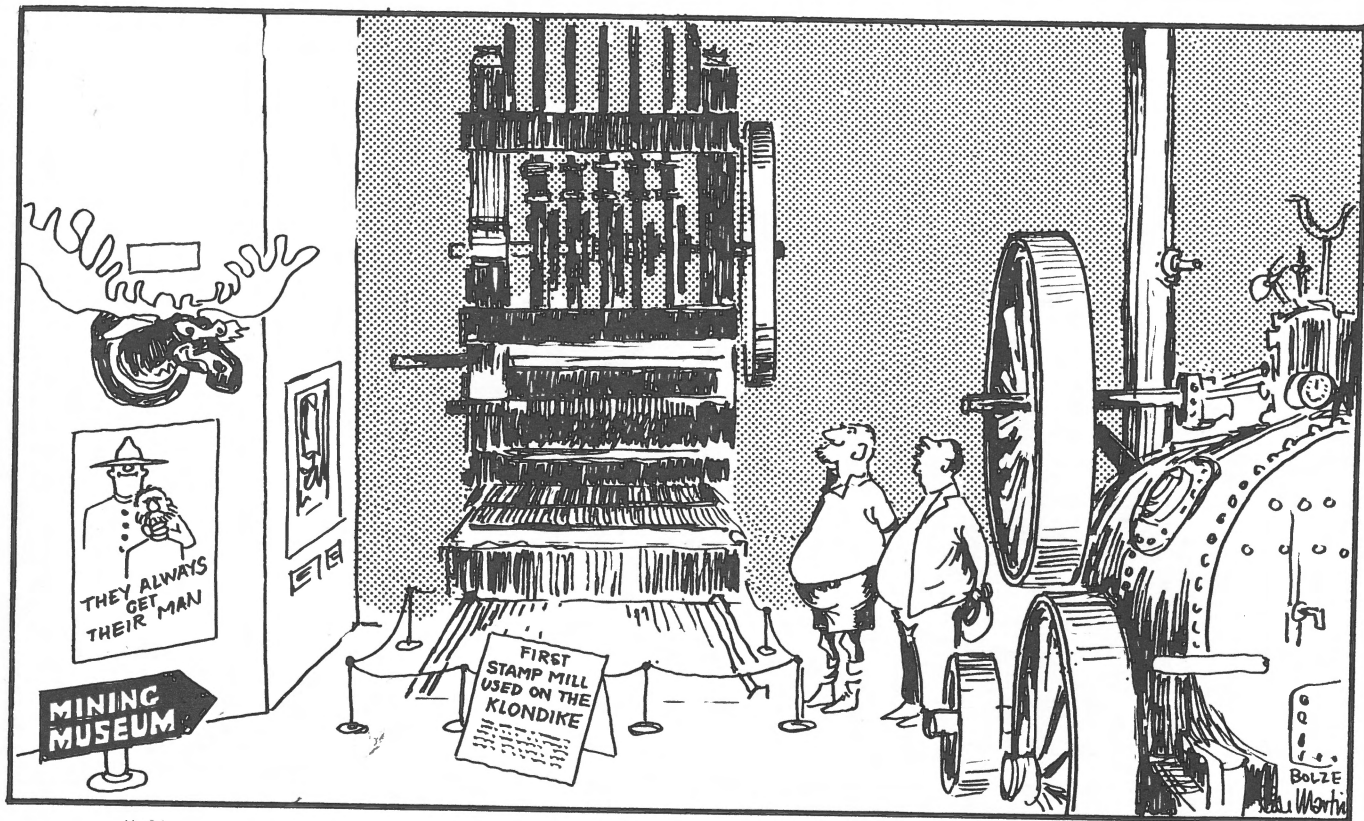
"Who knows, if Owen and his bunch are kicked out, a settlement is reached, sanctions are lifted, and our frozen funds released, we may just be able to make it before becoming candidates for a geriatric ward."



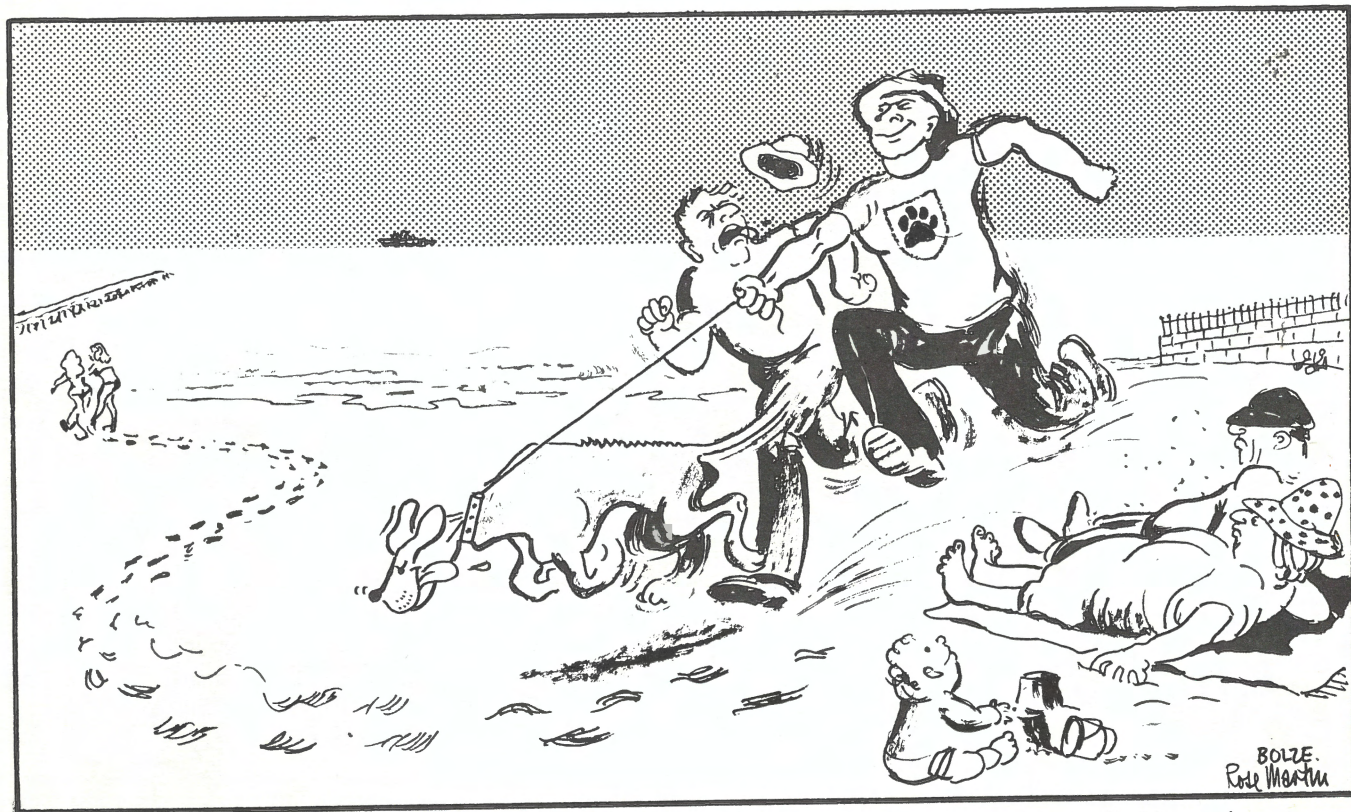
"And to think that I never once went out to Harari in my twenty years in Salisbury."



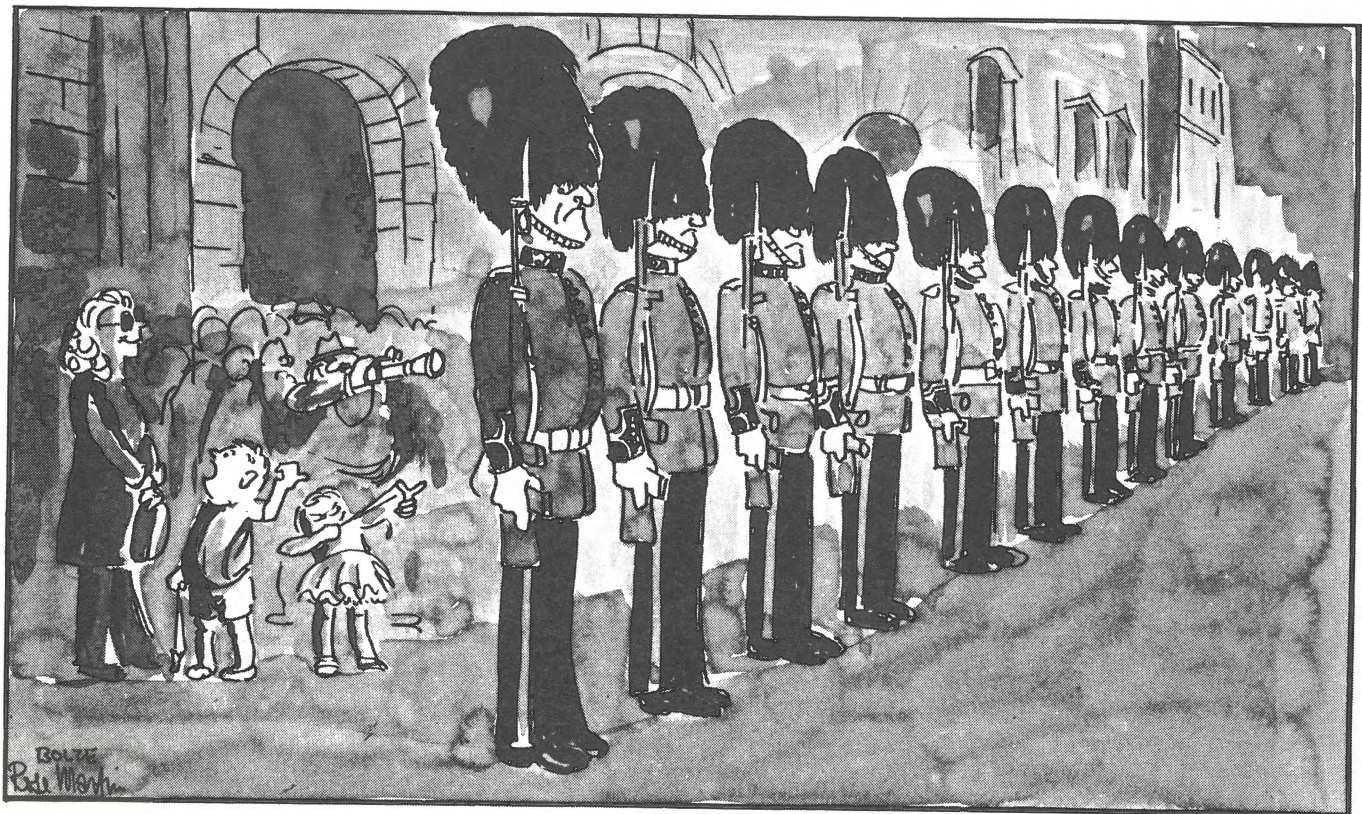
"I see Issy's in trouble with Exchange Control in Salisbury. He never could pull off a decent deal."



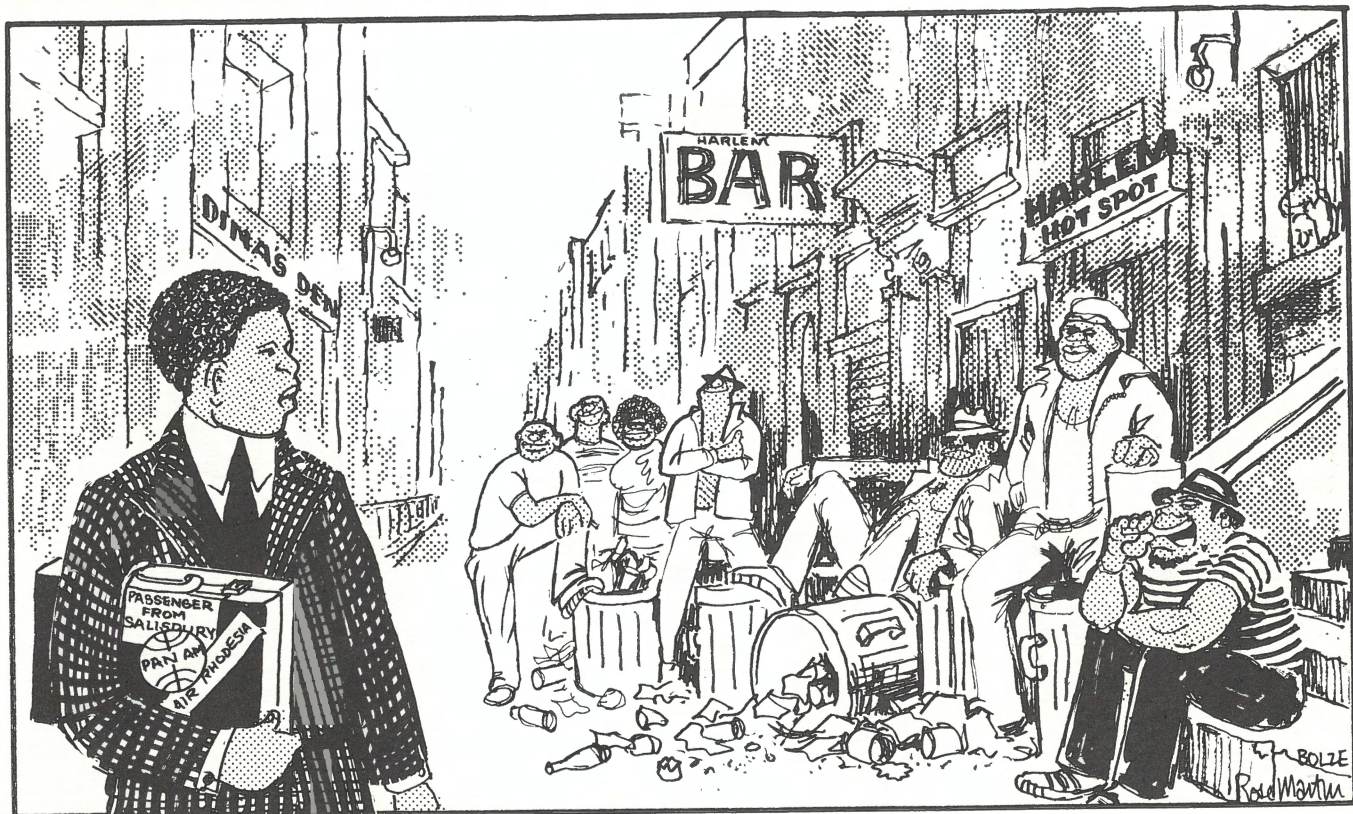
" No music was ever as sweet as the rhythm of my old five-stamp mill down at Hartley."



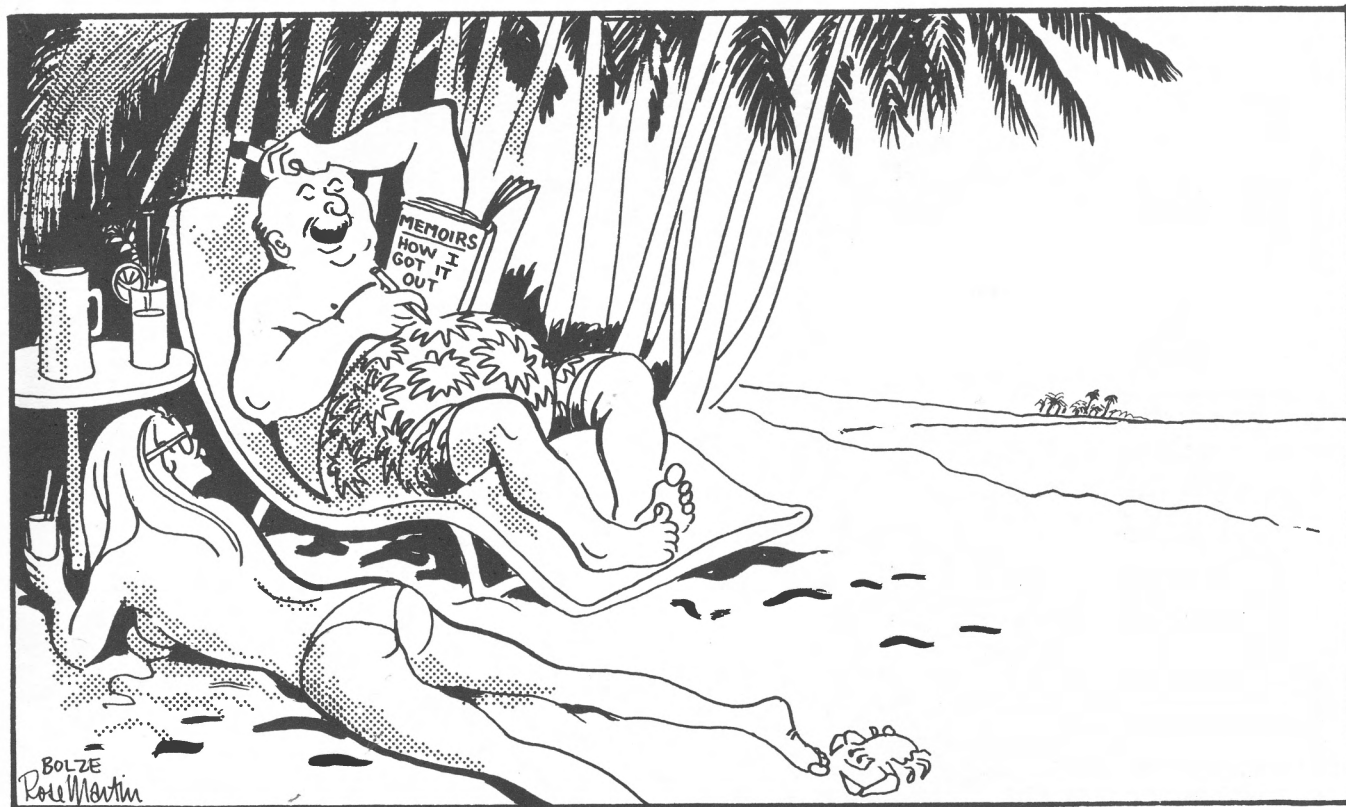
"Now that you're no longer in *PATU don't you think you should try to shake off this tracker instinct."



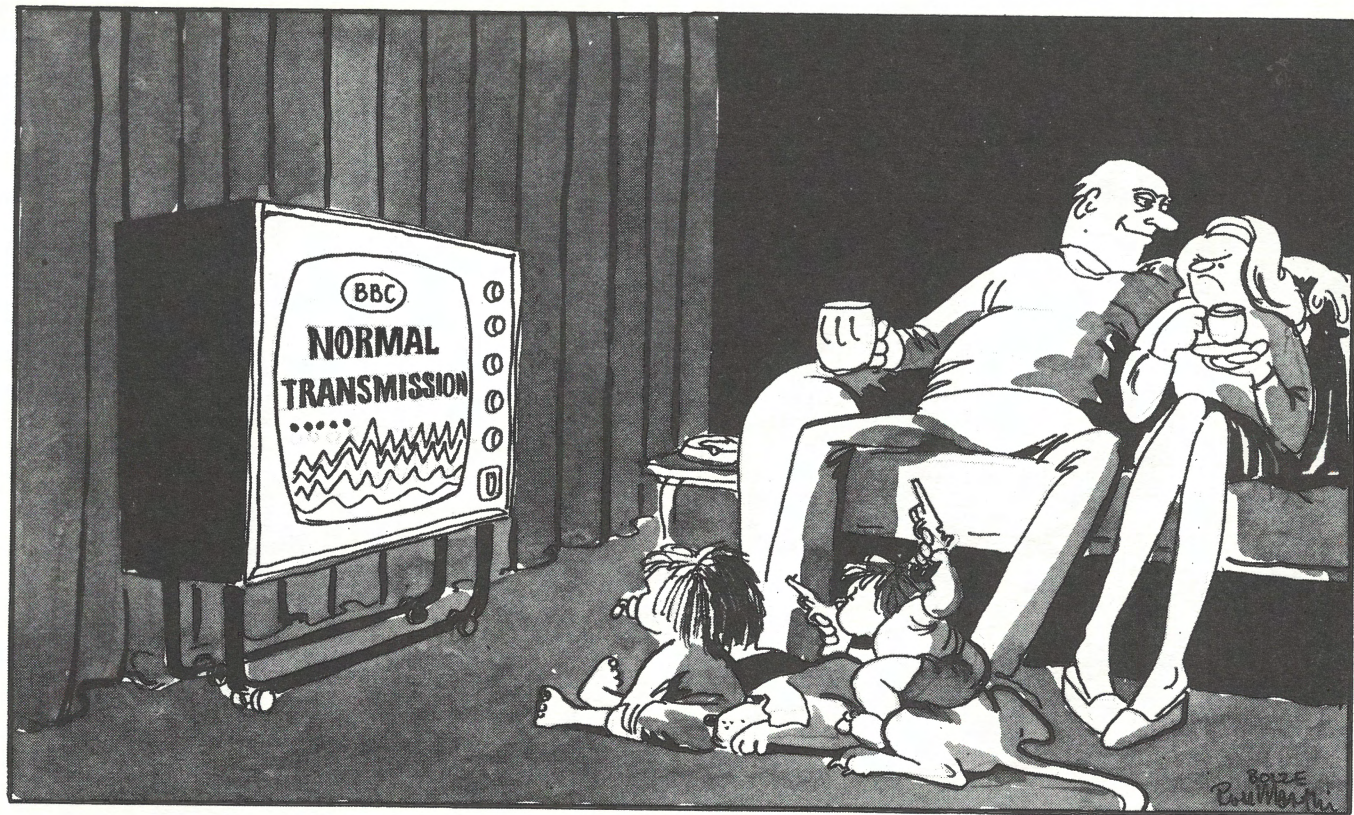
"How come they're just playing toy soldiers, mum, why don't they go to Rhodesia and fight terrors."



"Say, savage, where's your assegai?"



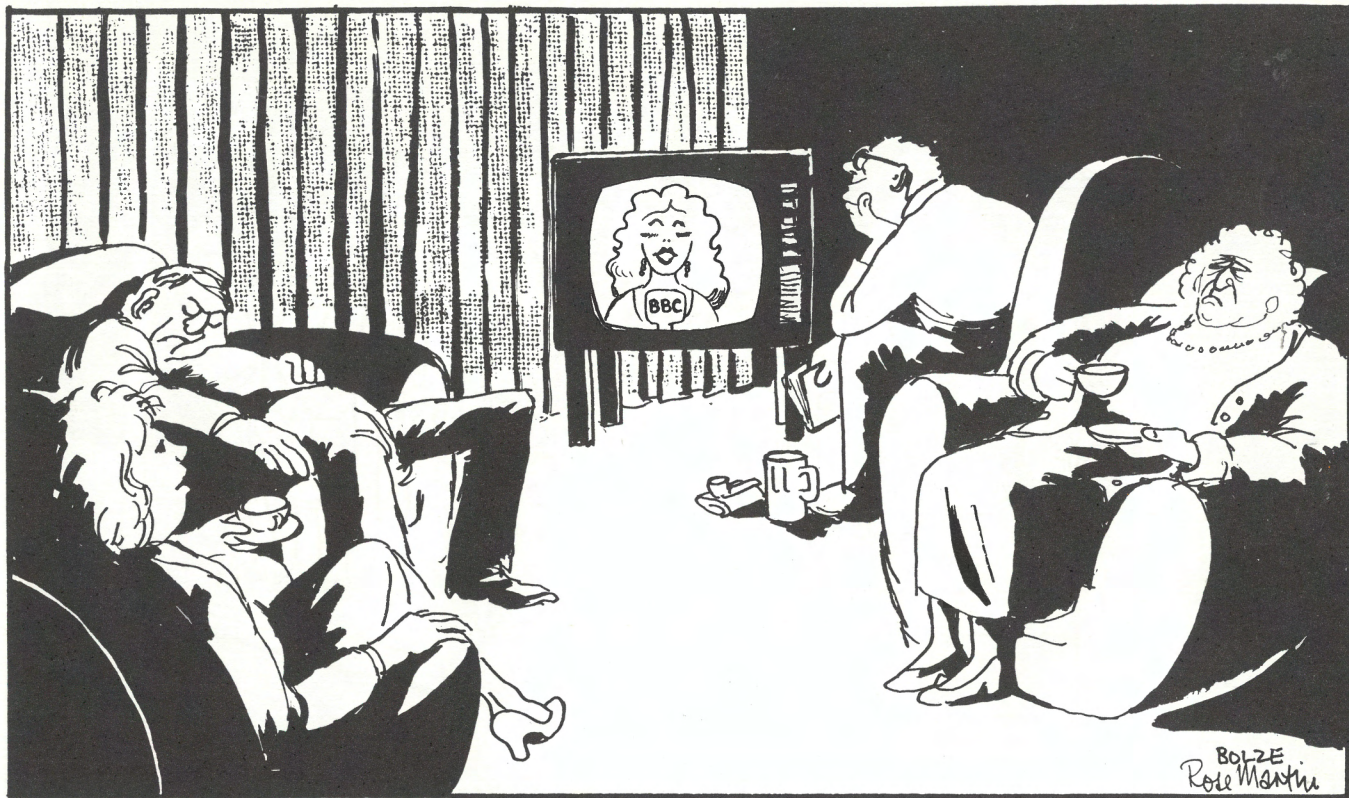
"How should I start: as a flashback from the day I bought the air tickets to Alaska or to our arrival in Salisbury?"



"Just like the good old days, eh dear."



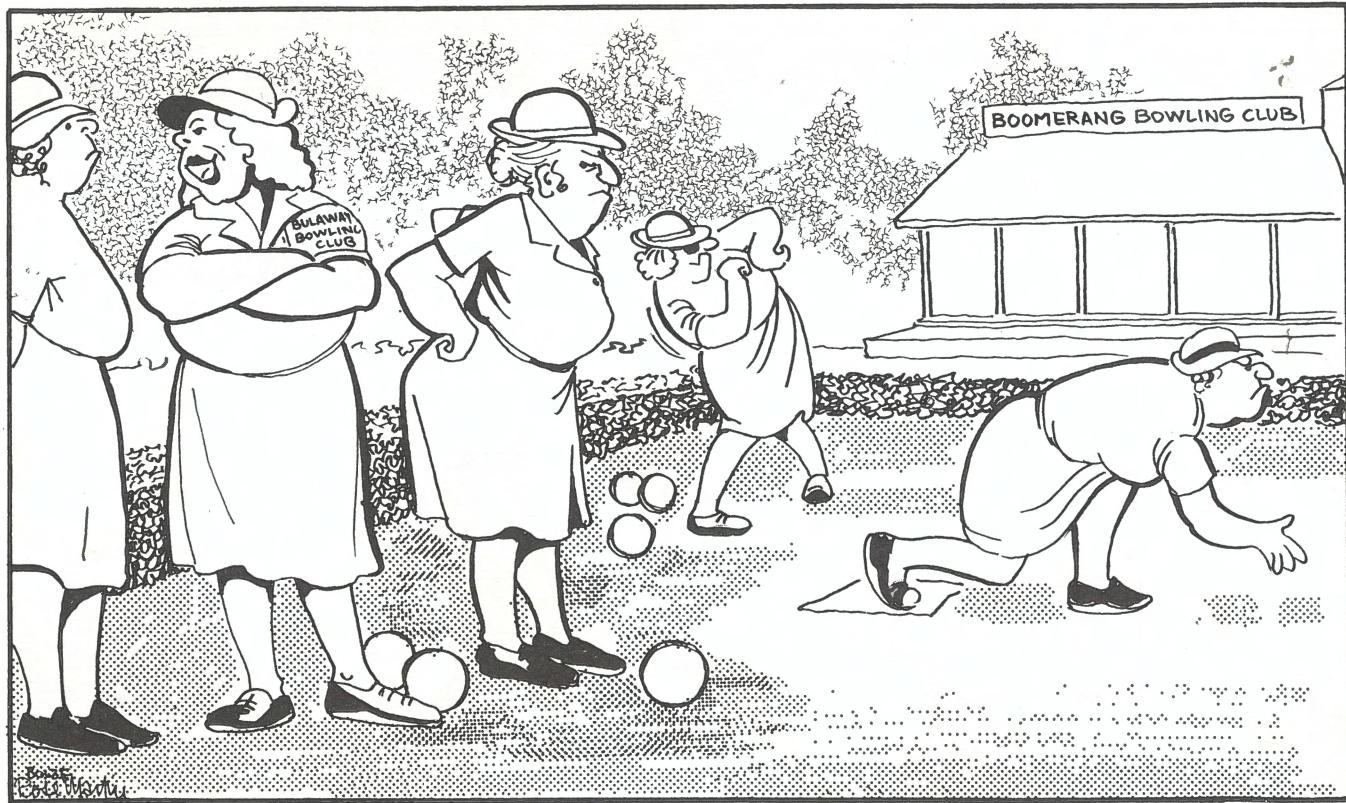
"When we lived at Highlands in Salisbury we had four servants and three cars . . . at 10 every second morning I used to meet my friends for bridge, and at 12.30 I had to pick up the kids from school. At 2 I used to tee off from the Royal Salisbury . . . but I was always home in good time for drinks at 6."



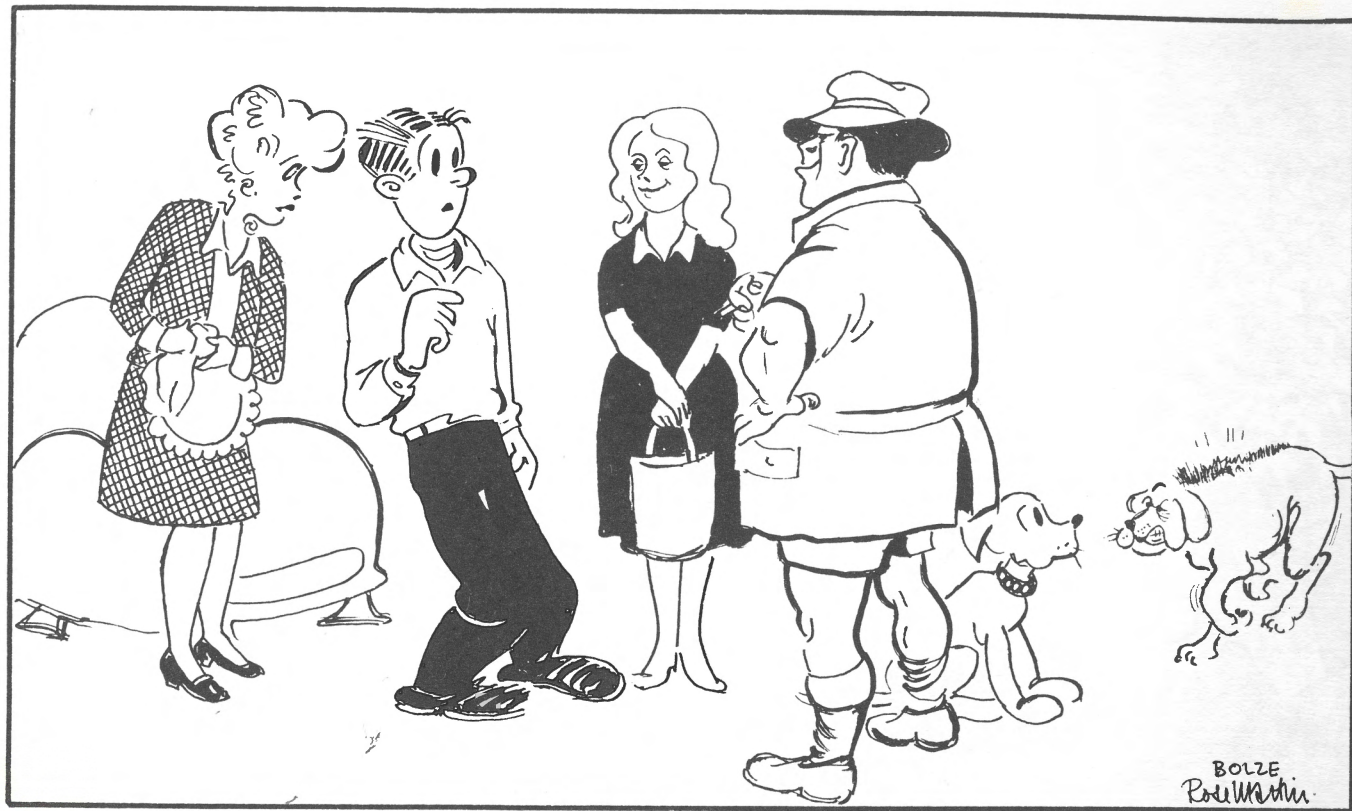
"She's not a patch on our Sonia."



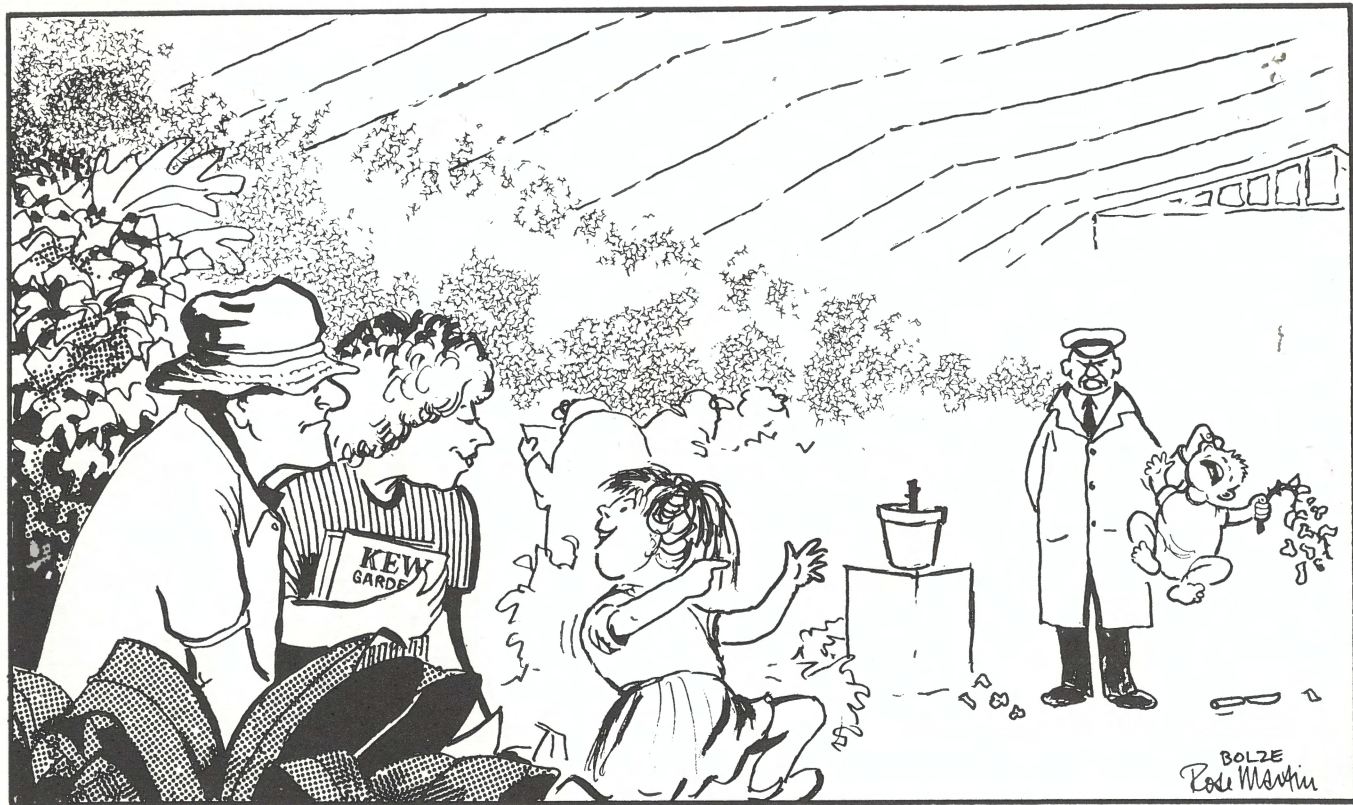
"I believe he's a Rhodesian Rhobanker still on the move."



"When we were in Rhodesia, I used to play bowls every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday; and golf on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Now that I'm a housewife I roll the woods once a month."



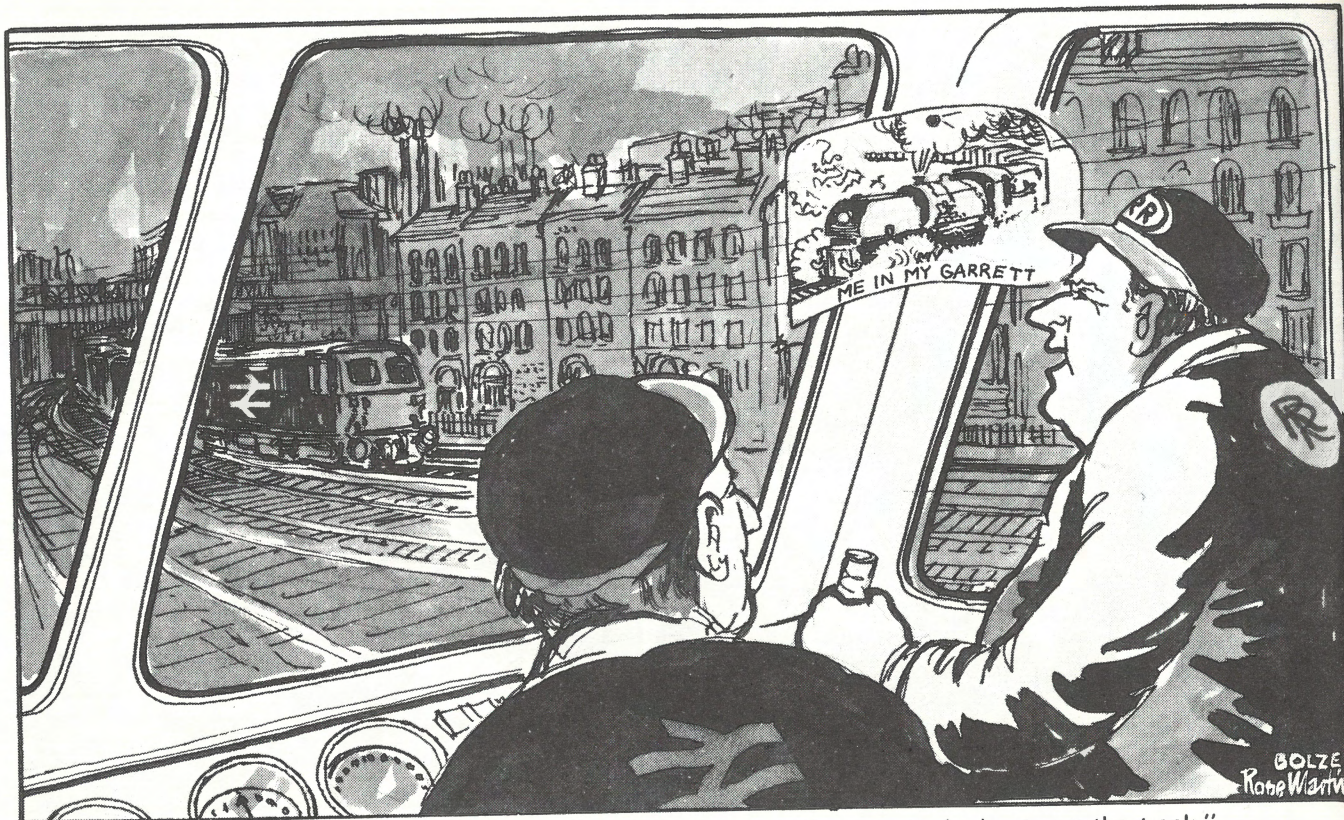
"You've got to be kidding about not having to do any housework."



"Mummy, mummy, look – a bougainvillea. Remember the super one we had growing right over the roof of our house at Shabani?"



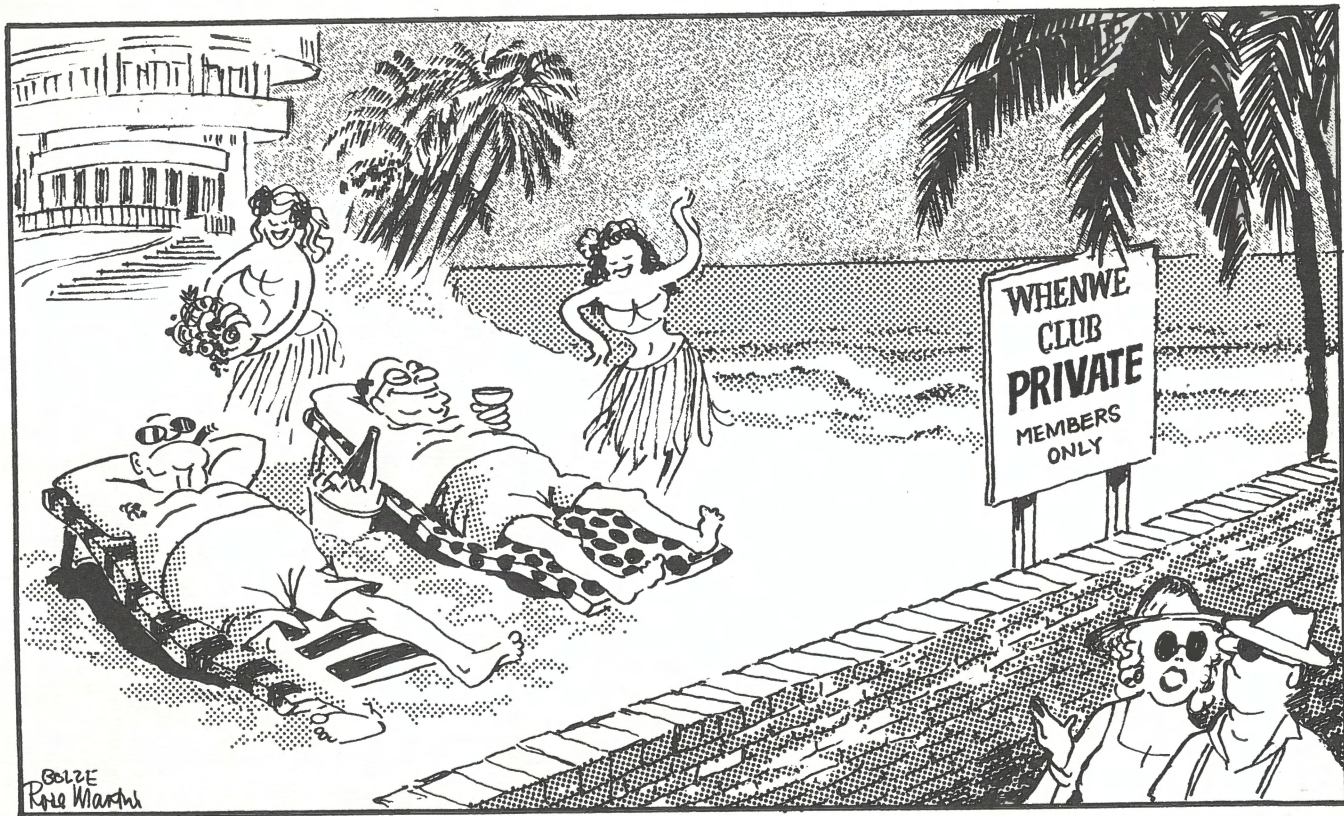
"The grass over here is certainly greener but it can never mean the same to me as the tall, waving golden-brown elephant grass of the Rhodesian winter veld, with its exciting wild life; and sounds and smells of Africa."



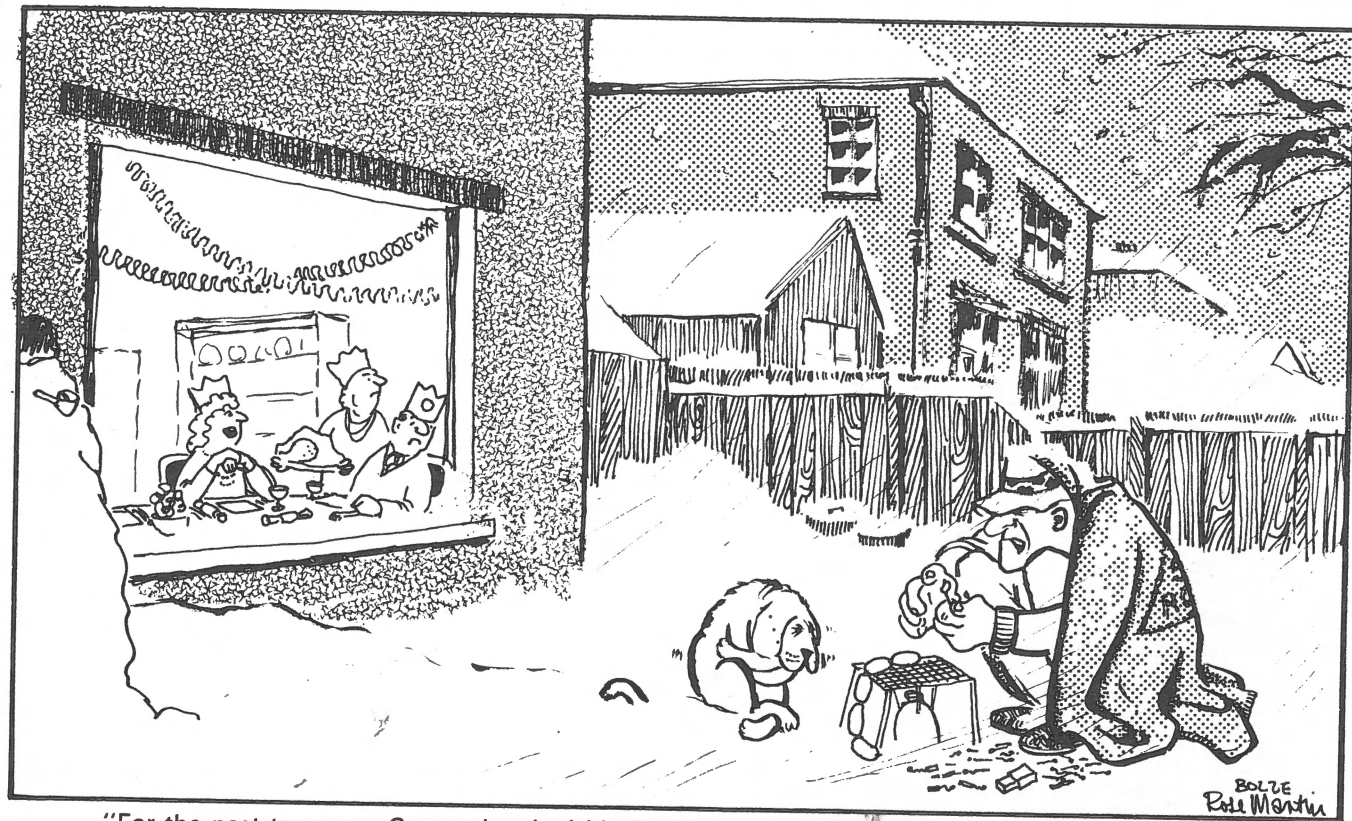
"On the run up to Vic Falls in my old Garratt I sometimes saw elephants on the track."



"Mum, when are we going to have a big garden with swimming-pool like we had in Bulawayo."



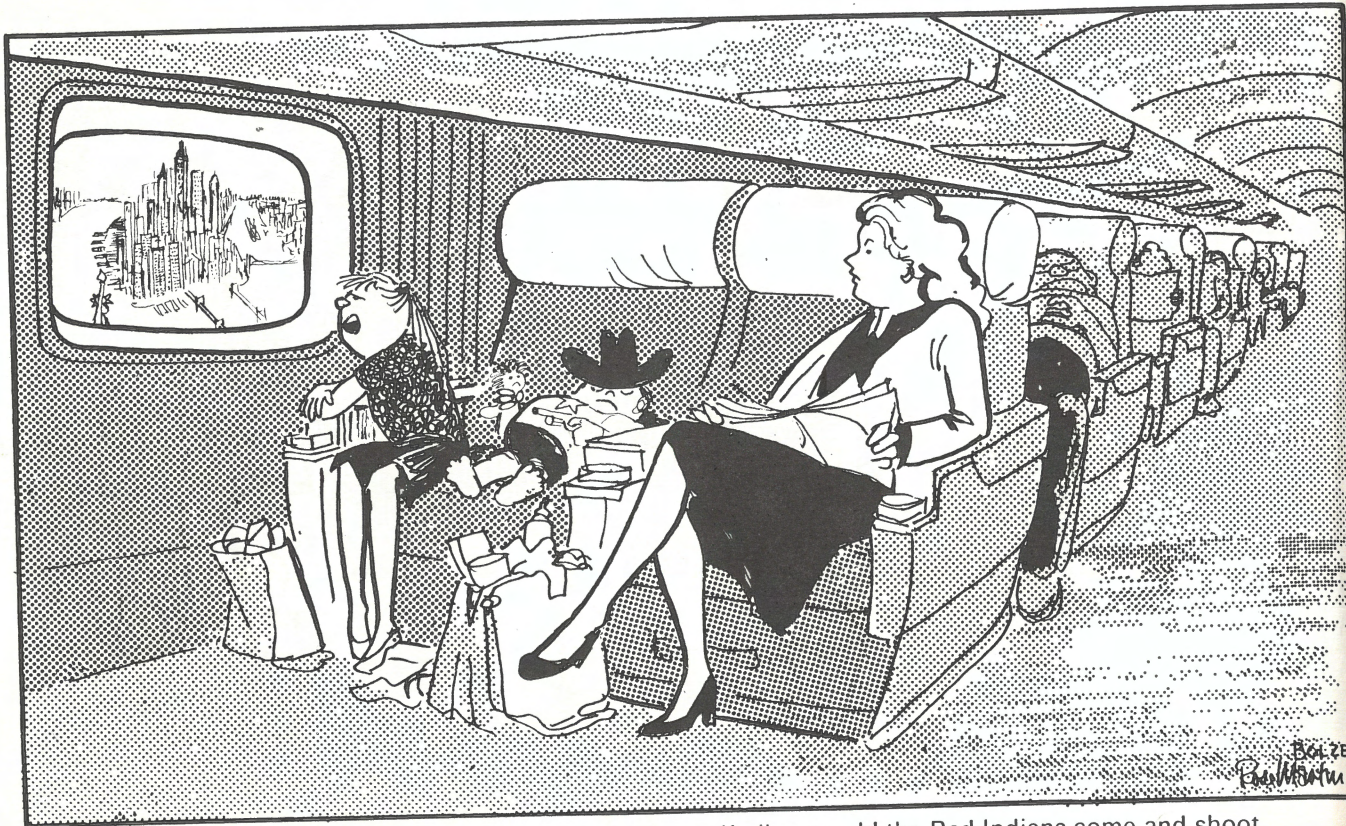
"I believe that the qualification for membership is that you must have beaten the Police, the Customs and the Reserve Bank."



BOLLE
Rudi Martin

"For the past ten years George has had his *braai on Christmas Day and he says he isn't going to be put off by a little snow."

**Barbecue*

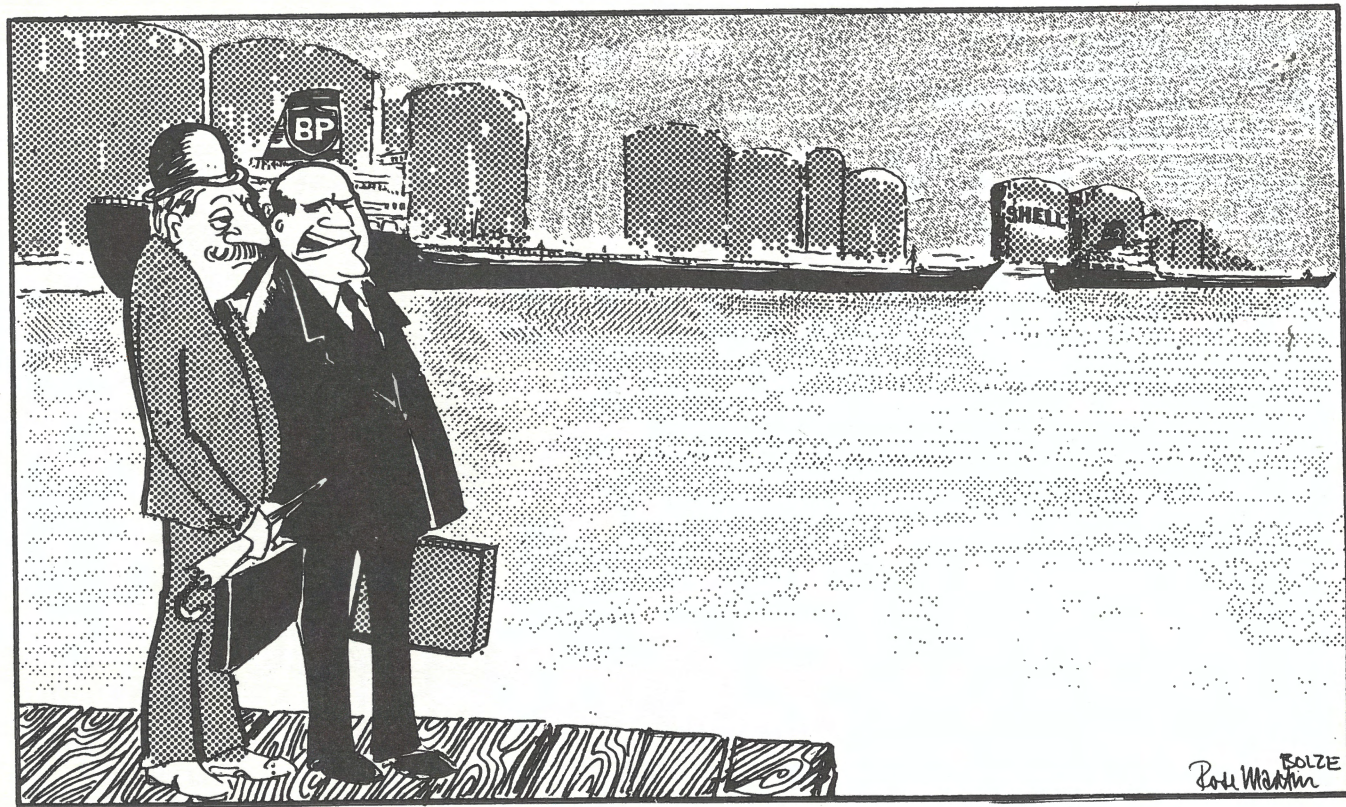


"Mummy, if we had to crash-land like they did near Kariba, would the Red Indians come and shoot us too?"

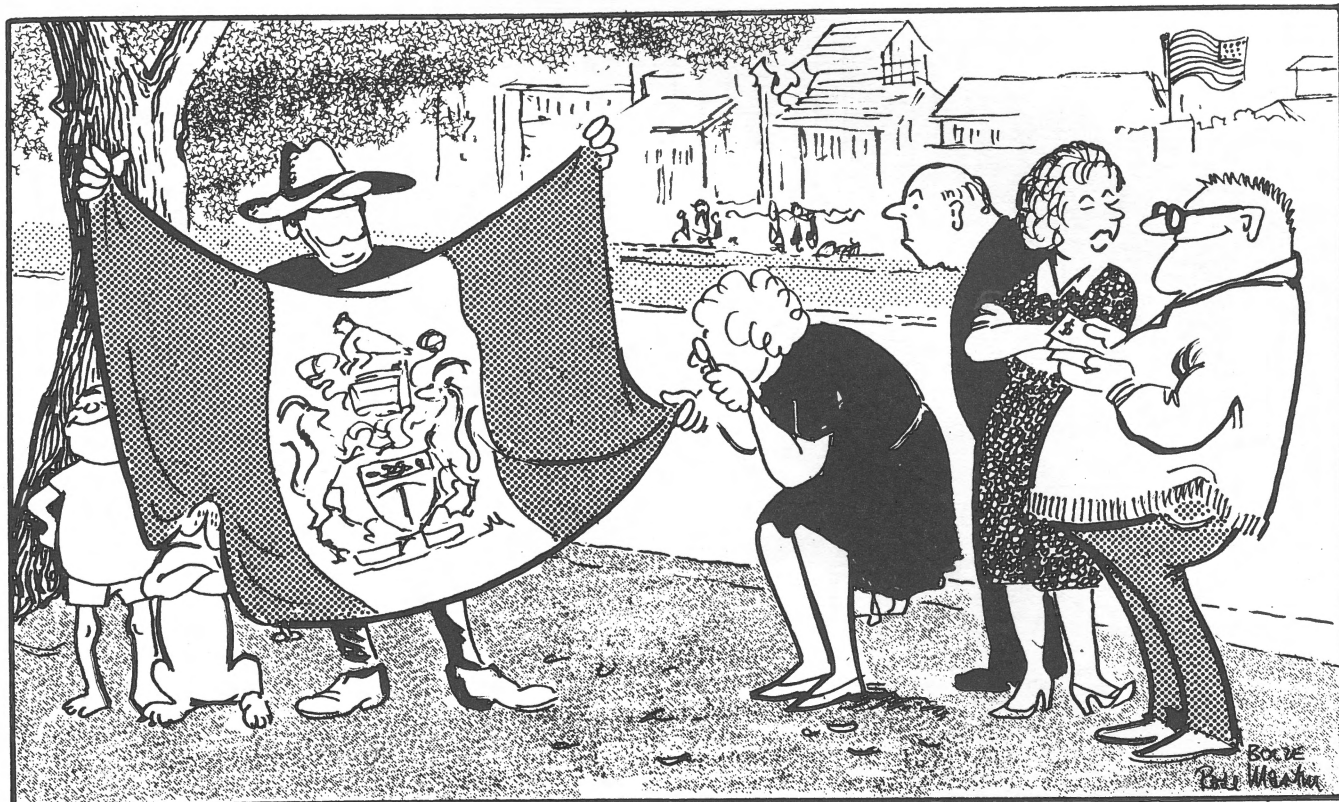


"I believe you used to farm at the *Sharp End."

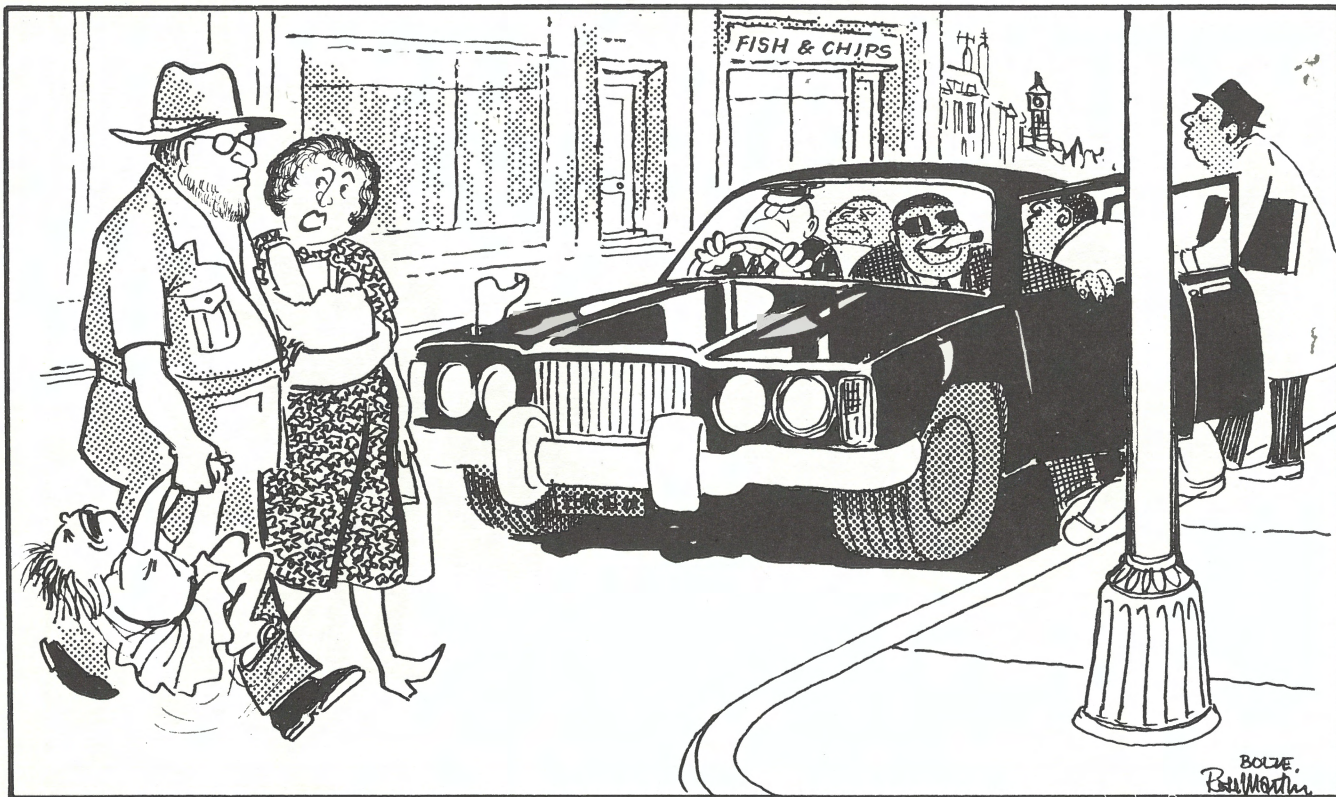
**Military Operational Area*



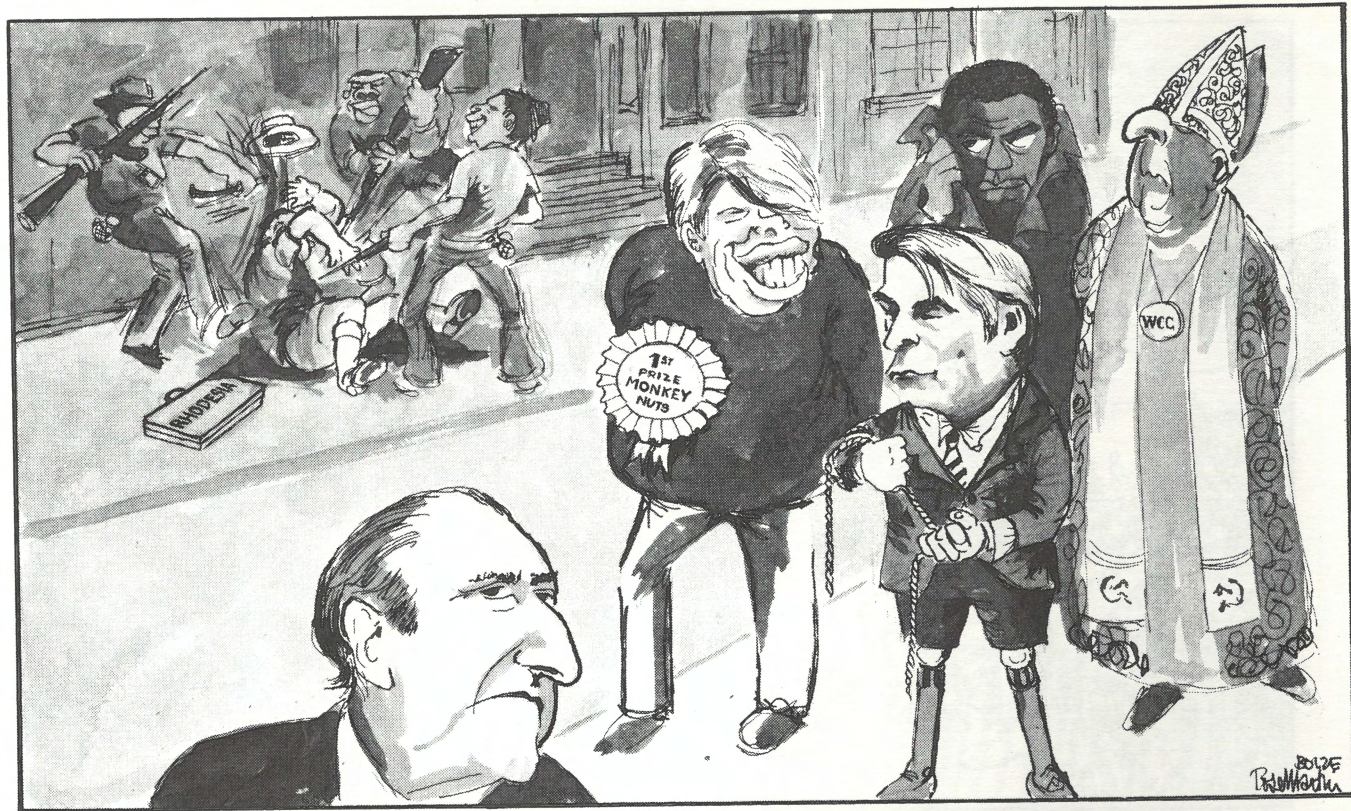
"We were at the receiving end alright, but we called it 'Boere Petrol'."



"Sell it for \$100? Never! He brought it over to fly every 11th November."



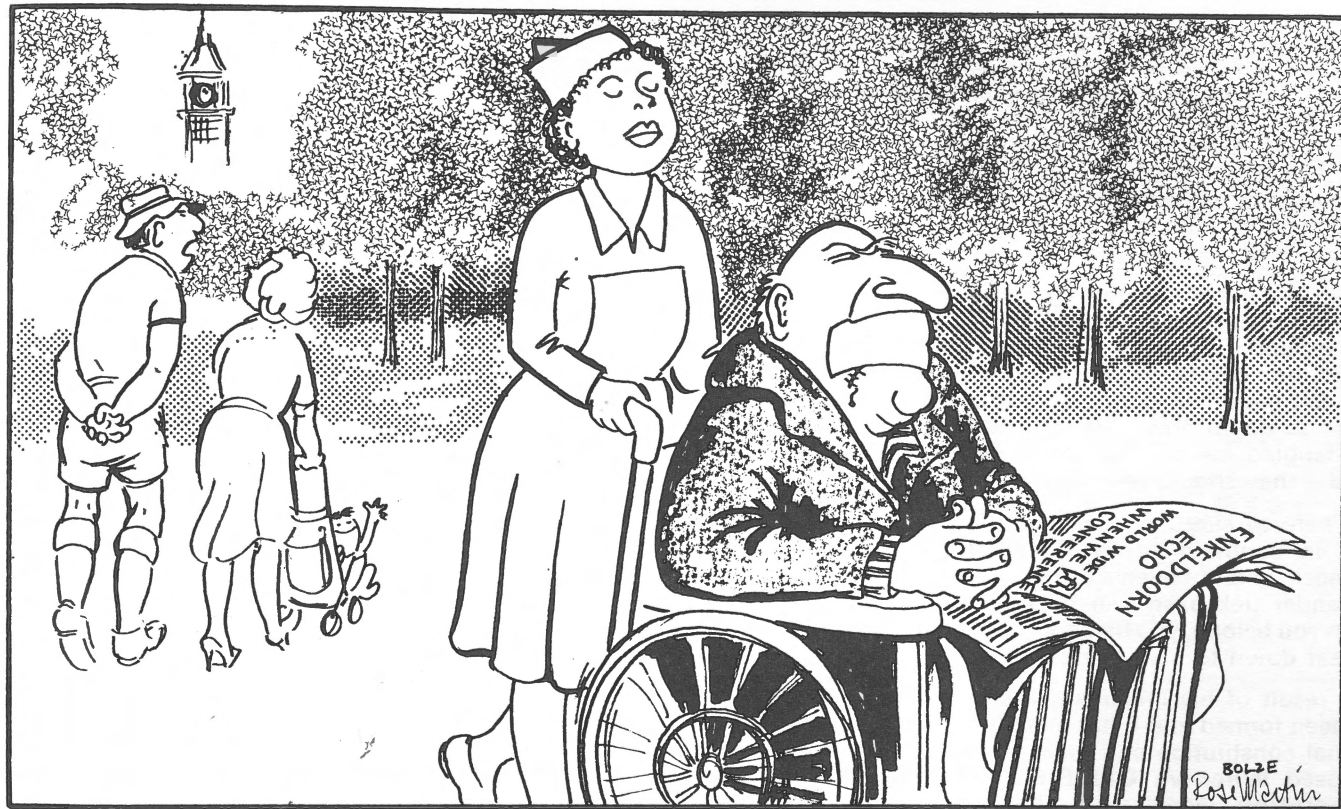
"That reminds me. Did you give the milkman his Christmas-box before we left?"



"Let's tie his hands, then he won't be able to defend himself."



"On my last week-end in Rhodesia I bagged a dozen guinea fowl up at the Gwaai, then got a bull elephant near Matetsi, pulled in some super 'tigers' at the Chobe, and finished off with 18 holes at the Elephant Hills golf course shortly before a rocket from Zambia put finish to the hotel building."



"They had him sewn up at Guy's; he was becoming intolerable."

POSTSCRIPT

THE WHENWE movement has been giving concern to many people in high places, and no more so than in the Republic of Enkeldoorn where one of their leading luminaries, Oom Piet van der Merwe, has taken the initiative in sponsoring a worldwide conference of Whenwes to be held at Enkeldoorn early in 1979.

At a recent public meeting in the local city hall, he made an impassioned plea to Rhodesians to stand their ground. He confessed that since his birth in Enkeldoorn seventy-eight years ago he had never once left the municipal boundaries, and he saw no reason to do so now. He did not hold with these new-fangled ideas of people flitting all round the world – they should take root, he said.

"I'm here to stay," he declared; "my people have been in southern Africa since the days of Van Riebeeck, and not even a span of sixteen of the best Afrikaner trek-oxen will be able to pull me out. When you belong, you belong," he said triumphantly, and sat down to a standing ovation.

As a result of his initiatives, a steering committee has been formed and it has already drawn up a provisional constitution and rules of membership for a proposed **Whenwe Old Boys' and Old Girls' Association**, membership of which will be open to all returning Whenwes.

The committee has given a great deal of thought to the various classes of membership and has agreed on a graded system which caters for all types of Whenwes, many of whom – contradictory though this may sound – are still resident in the country. The following are proposed:

- **Five Star Whenwes** – Those who came to Rhodesia as youngsters in the 1890s* ("When our wagon lost a wheel at Ramaquabane . . ."); and those who served with the Rhodesian contingent in the Anglo-Boer War ("When we were at Mafeking . . .").
- **Four Star Whenwes** – Those who served the 'Mother Country' in World War I ("When we were in the trenches . . .", etc.).
- **Three Star Whenwes** – Those Rhodesians who fought with the Allies in World War II ("When we flew in the Battle of Britain . . . When we were in the Western Desert . . ."); and later ("When we were in Malaya . . .").
- **Two Star Whenwes** – Men and women who have served with the Rhodesian Security Forces during the past 13 years ("When we were up at the Sharp End . . .").
- **One Star Whenwes** – Scholars in their last year at High School ("When we receive our call-up papers . . .").

*Entitled to wear flame lily cluster

The Whenwe Association will have its own distinctive banner, crest and tie, and will also operate a new **Welcome Home Committee**. Great patriot that he is, Oom Piet has offered to put up a trophy which

will be awarded to the Whenwe family which, on its return to Rhodesia, presents the most convincing and harrowing story of its un-Rhodesian experiences overseas.

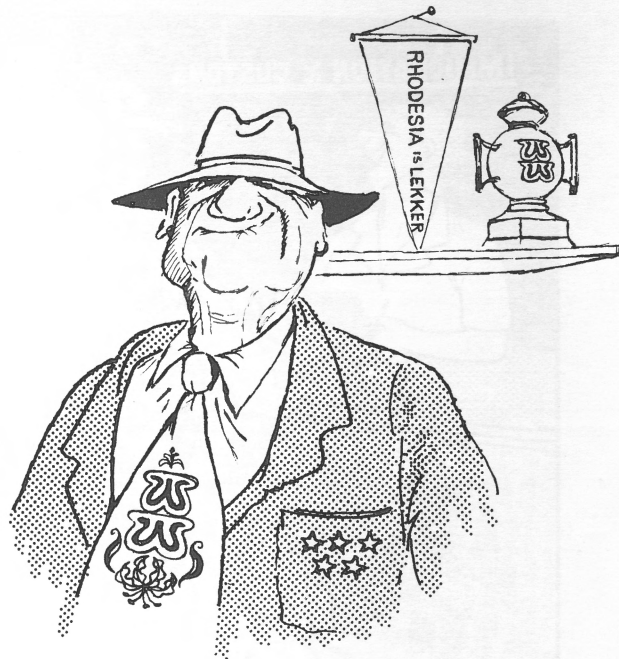
For those Whenwes who only wish to make the occasional sentimental pilgrimage from overseas back to Rhodesia, he is thinking of arranging low-cost air fares through the proposed **Friends of the Whenwes** which will operate as part of the new Association.

But Oom Piet has not yet made public his most cherished ambition, although he let it be leaked to the **Enkeldoorn Echo** this week: he intends to throw Enkeldoorn open for a Camp David type of summit to which he wants to invite President Carter. He sees this as a grand finale to the Whenwe Conference programme – a conference to end all conferences, a great time of reconciliation, and the beginning of the end of Rhodesia's problems as she marches boldly into a new era.

To quote his own down-to-earth words, he said: "Let's finish this family argument, and get next season's crops planted."

We wish him well with his plans, and may he see a bumper harvest in 1979.

L.W.B.





"Gent here says he's a returning Whenwe, and can he have extra *units to get back to Karoi."

**Petrol rationing coupons*



